



# THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL COLLINGWOOD



*By courtesy of the Masters of the Council Newcastle City Council*  
**Collingwood in his prime**

From a picture painted by J. Lonsdale in 1812 and now in the Mansion House, Newcastle upon Tyne

GEOFFREY MURRAY

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THE LIFE OF  
ADMIRAL COLLINGWOOD

WITH 24 ILLUSTRATIONS

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HUTCHINSON & CO.  
*(Publishers) Ltd.*  
LONDON

Made and Printed in Great Britain at  
*The Mayflower Press, Plymouth.* William Brendon & Son, Ltd.  
1936

TO  
OLIVE  
WHO ASKED ME  
TO



## PREFACE

**C**OLLINGWOOD was a representative Englishman. Though nearly two centuries separate us from his birth, his nature was composed of traits that are still the essence of the national character.

Courage was his outstanding quality. If the emphasis of this book appears to be on his battle performances, it is because those were the occasions when he was truest to himself.

Especially was he English in his Puritanism. In no other country in the world could a man devise and carry through the extraordinary education he planned for his daughters without its ever being hinted that he was an eccentric. His ideals and theories were echoed by his fellow-countrymen and consequently accepted as a matter of course.

He was English, too, in his love of the soil, his hatred of cruelty, his flamboyant patriotism, his dogmatic judgments, and his dour unimaginativeness. He delighted, for strictly utilitarian reasons, in beautifying the land. A kindred personality in another sphere was Dr. Johnson. The sea-fighter and the lexicographer were spiritual brothers.

This is the story of a man. That he was also a seaman is only important incidentally. Collingwood's errors and successes as a commander have no meaning for to-day. The strategy he practised is a thing of the past. Only the manner of his living has significance for us. To debate whether, by anchoring immediately after Trafalgar in a gale which blew for days, he might have saved the prizes is entirely profitless.

When we have recounted the manner of their loss, we have

done all that is possible for shedding the maximum amount of light upon the character of Collingwood in his struggle with circumstance. To do more, to draw conclusions of praise or blame, to justify or to excuse, is only to impose the prejudices of a writer, cut off from the questions at issue by a gulf of time that cannot possibly be bridged, between the reader and the subject and thus fog and confuse what should be clear-cut and sharp. Such judgments and digressions are as ridiculous as the togas with which monument-makers once draped their figures. If commentary is inevitable, it must come from the reader. He shall be the judge.

The basis of this life of Collingwood is the collection of the Admiral's correspondence which his son-in-law, G. L. Newnham, made and edited. Newnham doctored the letters when it suited his purpose, but it is chiefly their style that is suspect. I have used the fourth edition of the *Correspondence and Memoir* published in 1828. Newnham hoped that his work would prompt William IV to revive, for his benefit, Collingwood's peerage. To promote this end he included only what he thought showed his father-in-law in the best possible moral and professional light. All else was rigorously excluded.

Seventy years later, Clark Russell, raking over the old ground, came upon discarded material that served in some degree to humanise the seaman. But even Russell was denied the wealth of material that lay hidden in Collingwood's later *Journal*, and especially in his correspondence with "Jupiter" Carlyle. The Carlyle letters were most capably edited at the start of this century by Anderton and Oxberry. Six typescript copies of their work were made. I have drawn upon the copy that is kept in the Central Public Library, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where is also a typescript copy of the *Journal*.

Mr. E. F. Collingwood, of Lilburn Tower, Northumberland, a great-grand-nephew of the Admiral, has placed at my disposal a collection of about eighty unpublished letters

written by Collingwood to his brother and sister between March, 1776, and March, 1810. From this untapped source I have drawn extensively. Mr. Collingwood also permitted me to see a record of the official correspondence of Wilfrid Collingwood relating to the smuggling in the West Indies. This is in the form of copies, in Wilfrid's own handwriting, of the letters which he wrote and the replies he received concerning official matters in the West Indies. I am under a deep sense of obligation to Mr. Collingwood for allowing me the use of these sources, for permitting me to see executorship papers relating to the Admiral's estate, and for sanctioning photographs to be taken of relics in his possession.

Two works which have been constantly on my table while writing this book have been Mr. Masefield's *The Navy in Nelson's Time*, and Sir Henry Newbolt's *The Year of Trafalgar*. My debt to Mr. Masefield is particularly heavy.

Mr. C. Bernard Stevenson, Curator of the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-on-Tyne, went to unusual trouble in helping me to find suitable illustrations and arranging in many instances with the owners of relics for these to be photographed. His co-operation was invaluable.

Mr. Stanley Kerr kindly lent me an original letter in his possession.

I wish to thank Mr. R. Matheson, of Oldgate, Morpeth, and his family for the very kind way in which they helped me to trace the remains of Collingwood's gardening and tree-planting activities, and for permission to have photographs taken, and the steward of the Morpeth Constitutional Club for showing me over Collingwood's house and the grounds at the back.

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“ Is it a mere illusion of national vanity that prompts us to claim Lord Collingwood as a character purely English ? We do not know where such a character could have been formed but in England ; and feel quite satisfied that it is there only that it can be perfectly valued and understood.”

*Edinburgh Review, 1828.*

“ The only Englishman who appears to have divined Napoleon’s great plan was Collingwood, an almost unique example in history of a man at once too great and too small for the work he had to do. He ought to have been either a First Lord of the Admiralty or a boatswain in a man-of-war.”

A. F. FREMANTLE, *Trafalgar, 1933.*



## PART I

### I

### STONE AND SCULPTOR

**I**N Northumberland when the weather is clear, the blue, round heads of the Cheviots can be seen from Kenton Bank, eighty miles away, the highest point around Newcastle-on-Tyne, the birthplace of Cuthbert Collingwood, Nelson's second fiddle. The tall brick house in which he was born on October 24, 1748, stood in a crooked Elizabethan street which tumbled down the northern bank of the Tyne midway between the Cathedral and the castle, and almost within sight of the wild dark hills of the Border.

Disciples of Ruskin—if any still remain—may find in that accident of birth the key to Collingwood's character, for the Cheviots are granite hills. Such districts, according to the Sage, are remarkable for the influence their “intense purity” has on the characters of those who live there. “As far as I can remember,” Ruskin wrote, “the inhabitants of granite countries have always a force and healthiness of character . . . as distinguished from the inhabitants of the less pure districts of the hills.”

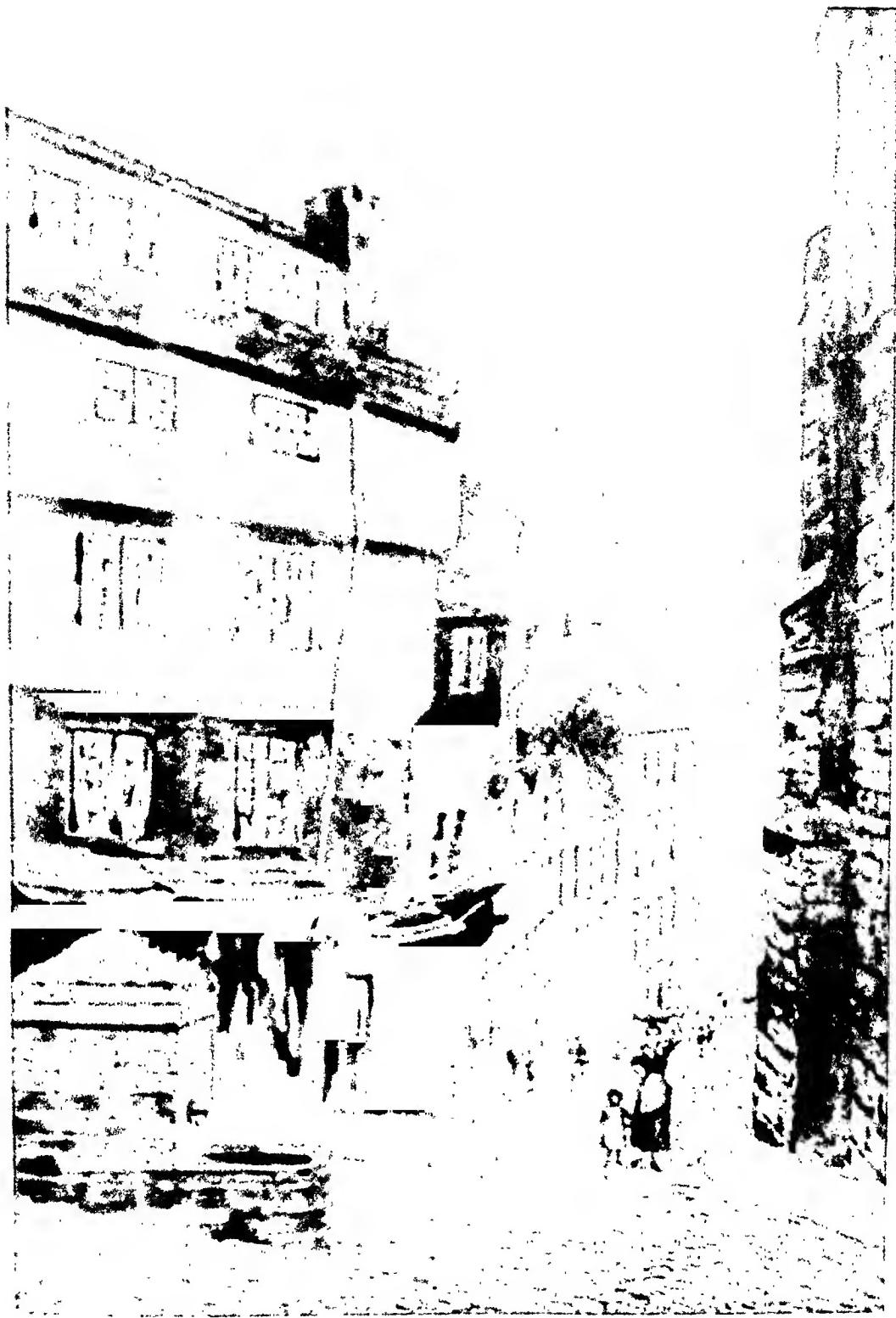
Collingwood was as rough, strong, and durable as his native granite, but it was more than the coincidence of natal geography that made him so. The family from which he sprang had lived for centuries on the Cheviots' south-eastern flank, but it is debatable whether the lives of his ancestors support

Ruskin's fancy that their "force and healthiness of character" distinguished them from natives of "less pure districts."

The Collingwood line was old and its most marked characteristic was turbulence, for which Border forages had provided a convenient outlet. Ballad-makers have commemorated their fighting powers and two other marked traits—their courtesy and a fatal gift for being on the losing side.

These were traits which the family never lost. Ralph Collingwood impoverished the family fortunes when he took up the cause of Charles the First during the Civil War and lost his estate in Durham for his pains. His fate did not deter his descendants from championing the Stuart cause, and his punishment was meted out to Collingwood's great-grandfather, George, who was hanged at Liverpool for the part he took in the rebellion of 1715. George's estate at Eslington, in Northumberland, passed to a younger branch of the family, for his eldest son, Collingwood's grandfather, though he had remained loyal to Hanover, refused, in spite of local pressure, to claim his heritage. This deprived Collingwood's father of his place among the Northumbrian squirearchy. The lack of a patrimony forced him to Newcastle and into trade. On January 14, 1727, he was bound apprentice for ten years to Mr. Christopher Dawson, a merchant adventurer and boothman of that city.

When his apprenticeship had been served, he set up in business for himself in a house in The Side overlooking the commerce of the Tyne. Along the street were picturesque old buildings, with overhanging storeys, housing the shops of other merchants, goldsmiths, milliners, upholsterers, and shoemakers. It was a busy thoroughfare, thronged by seamen and the Quality, yet the young merchant did not thrive. His adventures turned out misadventures. Like generations of Collingwoods before him he laid his money the wrong way. Nor did business improve when he married Milcah Dobson, of Barwess in Westmorland. By September, 1744, he was



*By courtesy of the Art Gallery Committee, Newcastle City Council*

Collingwood's Birthplace in the Side, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

From a print by P. Toft in the Laing Art Gallery and Museum,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



compelled to call his creditors together and make over to them all his real and personal estate, except furniture to the value of £100 and the clothes of his wife and himself.

Yet he did not despair. In the emergency he showed that he, too, was imbued with his family's fighting spirit and he plodded on. Presently he had repaid fourteen shillings in the pound on his debts. Early in 1747 the creditors met once more. They were offered another two shillings and sixpence in the pound. This they agreed to accept in full satisfaction of their claims. The merchant had won through. He was free once more. Next year, when a son was born to him, he was not ashamed at the font of St. Nicholas' Cathedral to give the boy his own name.

There were ten children altogether. One died in infancy. Three sons and six daughters survived. The square, brick house in The Side became comfortably full. There was no stint—and no extravagance. The provision made for physical and mental needs was plain but adequate. At the age of four Collingwood, a "pretty and gentle boy" according to Lord Chancellor Eldon, his most distinguished schoolfellow, who also speaks of him as "mild and tender," was sent to the Grammar School at Newcastle which Thomas Horsley, a merchant adventurer who had been mayor of the city in 1525, had founded.

Eldon in later life took care to noise abroad the fame of this two-hundred-years-old day school. Whatever its educational status may have been at that time, there is no doubt that the head master, the Reverend Hugh Moises, was an outstanding character. The birch, the Bible, and the classics were the tools he used for cutting and shaping the blocks of rough hewn native granite sent to him for sculpting.

Young Cuthbert—he was soon known for the rest of his life as "Cuddie," for that is the local contraction of the name which is also applied in Northumberland to donkeys—had only a short distance to walk as he crept unwilling to

school. He passed the Cathedral, with its radiant lantern tower, and turned left along the street that was afterwards to bear his name. In another minute or two he was at school, which then stood where Neville Street joins Westgate Road.

From his first day there he was conscious that Mr. Moises' schoolmaster's eye was everywhere. There was no escaping it. Every boyish ruse was discovered and the experimenter taught to quail at his temerity in trying to hoodwink the omnipotent and omniscient head.

Mr. Moises' school was divided, like Gaul, into three parts —Upper, Middle, and Lower. In the days when Collingwood struggled to memorise his tables and declensions, he had the benefit each Friday of the head master's personal supervision. It was always a dreadful day. Mr. Moises expected so much. Woe unto anyone who failed to please Jove during these weekly descents from Olympus represented in this case by the inner sanctum where he presided over the senior boys. As Collingwood moved up the school his conviction grew that never for a moment, both in and out of school, did the head master forget his pupils.

Every morning Collingwood, having assembled with the other boys, solemnly bowed to the terrifying Mr. Moises as he swept into school and then listened to the head master reading a selection of prayers from the Liturgy. Next one of the senior boys would be chosen to read to the school a chapter from the New Testament. For the seniors the next stage in the day's work was a lecture from the head upon the chapter they had just heard, after which the class construed it into Latin. A later pupil has recorded that this mode of instruction "had a great effect."

Mr. Moises encouraged his older boys to write sermons. He was a great believer in the value of the early composition of these homilies, but he was not sanguine enough to hope that his pupils would approve of their youthful efforts when they were older, so, with a proper caution, he advised them

to burn their essays as soon as they had been marked. It was Mr. Moises' belief that the writing of sermons fostered habits of study and composition that would be "of essential advantage" to the authors in after life. Undoubtedly they had their effect on Collingwood's style—an effect like the bandages on the feet of Chinese children.

Mr. Moises' command of Greek and Latin was absolute. Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes were all studied by the boys. Collingwood, when he entered the inner room in which the Upper School sat, was taught to recite the orations of Isocrates, Æschines, and Demosthenes. Another of his exercises was to translate the whole of Longinus' *Commentary on the Sublime*. But it was in Latin that the head master specially excelled. All the classics came alike to him, but he was particularly fond of Horace, Terence, and Plautus. Mr. Moises, who was wont in the morning to take his seat at his desk with all the dignity of a judge, delighted to enact personally the comedies of Terence and Plautus before his dutifully amused class. He forgot his dignity and clowned to his heart's content.

Nevertheless, in spite of their close study of the Old and New Testaments, the Liturgy, their sermons, and Longinus, his scholars were apt, with distressing frequency, to manifest a full legacy of original sin. Then indeed was Mr. Moises terrible in his wrath. All else having failed, he relied on the efficacy of flogging as a practical corrective and he did not shirk the task of birching seventeen boys one after the other, even though it made his arm weary. He had his duty to his pupils to perform and perform it he would, in spite of any personal discomfort, such as a stiff arm, that he might have to endure.

Lord Chancellor Eldon, as a boy, was frequently flogged twice a day—once by his father to cure his disinclination for early rising, that cardinal article in the commercial creed of Englishmen, and again by Mr. Moises for fear the father's

less expert hand had not made the punishment sufficiently felt. Mr. Moises ever had before him the Biblical injunction not to spare the rod.

Yet it was not the necessity for soft seating that led Eldon to the Woolsack, for repeated birchings seem to have enabled him to hand on to his descendants, as an acquired characteristic, imperviousness to pain in the buttocks. He once asked his grandson, when at Winchester where the lad was at school : " Well, John, when were you last flogged ? " And the boy was able to reply with a laugh : " About ten minutes ago, Grandpapa."

" In the disregard of floggings I then entertained," the young man has recorded, he had declined to commute the punishment to ten lines of Virgil, which the master had pressed him to do.

Collingwood in later life came to abolish flogging in his ships. Was it because, as a boy, his backside had been tenderer than Lord Eldon's, or did he recognise the uselessness of flogging his tough Tynesiders, men of granite like himself, and seek for punishments elsewhere ?

## HE GOES TO SEA

**N**EITHER blows nor the performances of the Reverend Mr. Moises in the comedies of Plautus could turn Collingwood into a scholar. Like Clive, he gave no promise of future greatness during his boyhood. Mr. Moises turned out of his school one Lord Chancellor ; one head of the Admiralty bench in Lord Stowell—Eldon's brother ; one Indian judge, Sir Robert Chambers ; the antiquarian, Brand ; and Burdon, the philosopher. It is a magnificent record for an obscure schoolmaster teaching in an ancient day school in a small North-country town.

But Collingwood did not climb to fame on a ladder of books. From the upper windows of his home in The Side he could see the sails of vessels crowding the Tyne. The ships themselves sailed almost to his door. He had only to run to the bottom of his street and turn the corner and he was on the quay-side mixing with pig-tailed, swarthy men, smelling of salt and tar, with gold rings in their ears and long curling hair under black glazed hats. Whence came they and whither were they bound ?

Sophocles and Terence were dead. Let them rot in their graves. Their books held no interest for him. But those bluff, strong sailors—his uncle, Captain Brathwaite, for instance, with his cocked hat, queue, and sword—theirs was a life that a boy with a granite body and born of a race of fighting romantics might well desire. By the time Collingwood was thirteen his father was able to afford the £30 a year

necessary for the lad to enter the Navy as a "youngster" or volunteer. Accordingly he was allowed to exchange Sophocles, retinons, and the birch for a berth in the steerage of his uncle's ship, the *Shannon* frigate.

He had scarcely set foot on deck before the glamour of the sea faded. Voices constantly bawled at him to take his hands out of his pockets, not to lounge against the guns, nor even lean against the ship's sides as the vessel rocked. There was no bed for him to sleep in, but an awkward hammock, which was not nearly as comfortable as he had supposed. If he was not up by half-past seven in the morning, his hammock was cut down.

To his dismay he found there were to be lessons from the Captain himself. He had to polish up his mathematics, learn trigonometry, nautical astronomy, navigation, how to use the quadrant, and the way to calculate the ship's position by dead reckoning or the sun's altitude. The lieutenants wanted innumerable errands running, and there was boat service to be done. Watches had to be kept when he wanted to sleep, and he must climb the rigging to learn how to furl or reef a sail and bend canvas.

Each time the sails were furled he had to climb to the top of the masts and cheer on the men from that intimidating height. But worst of all was the look of the dark hole that henceforth was his home. The glass of the scuttle was black with dirt. The only light came from one dim lantern. The hole resembled a coal-nine, for its ceiling, against which he crushed his hat, was less than six feet from the floor. The stench of the bilges, mingling with a score of other smells, filled his nose and turned his stomach.

Except for a table, whose surface was stained with gravy and human blood—the ship's surgeons used it for their operations—and the youngster's chests, which served as chairs, the hole was without furniture. A few old clothes, he saw as his eyes grew used to the darkness, hung from some

nails beside a set or two of boxing gloves and a pair of single-sticks. This was the Navy. Already he was longing to see once more Mr. Moises and his birch, his home in The Side, Wilfrid and John, his brothers, and his three small sisters. When he thought he was unobserved, he crept into the darkest corner of the dark hole and sobbed out his heart. . . .

The First Lieutenant heard him. It was an unaccustomed sound. He went over to investigate and saw the boy blubbering like a girl. His rough heart, hardened by much service, was touched. He patted the lad on the shoulder and told him to cheer up. The Navy was good fun. Soon he would be fighting the French, seeing strange lands, and, after all, he was a man now, and this would never do. The tears were dried. The sobs ceased. The little boy knew that he had found a friend. How to show him his gratitude? Why, surely—he took the First Lieutenant by the hand and led him to his box. He opened it and took out his particular treasure, his mother's parting gift, a plum cake. Would not the officer have a piece?

Homesickness quickly passed. Soon he was absorbed in the full round of a youngster's life. Even had he wished to, it would have been impossible to have written a sermon or studied Longinus. Jack Mitford, a fellow-Northumbrian, has described what a boy's life was like aboard ship in the eighteenth century :

“ . . . 'Twas folly trying  
To read i' th' *berth*—for what with shying  
Hats about—and playing flutes,  
Backgammon—boxing—cleaning boots,  
And other such polite pursuits.  
Skylarking—eating—singing—swigging,  
And arguments about the rigging,  
'This mast how taut,' 'That sail how square,'  
All study had been fruitless there.”

The food could stand no comparison with what he was used to, but that made no difference to his remarkable

diction—an ariet that was to serve him well all the days of his life. He had brought with him to the frigate a large supply of onions and potatoes, some Dutch cheeses, tea, coffee, sugar, and pepper. He paid the mess caterer £5 and added £1 a month to this while the *Star·um* remained in commission. The mainstay of his rations was one pound of biscuits daily, two pounds of beef on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and one pound of pork on Sundays and Thursdays. This the youngsters occasionally augmented by catching rats and roasting them.

The butter often tasted of mouse, for the vermin were apt to gorge themselves to death on it and remained undiscovered until the bottom of the cask was reached. Biscuits were either weevily or mouldy. Weevils had a bitter taste and were uneatable. Margins were cold to the palate, but were not despised as food.

The water, as like as not, was full of "green, grassy things," stagnant and flat. It was best to drink the beer, of which a gallon a day was issued as rations. For dinner he had pea soup, pork, or beef, and sometimes duff. The meat, which was roasted, was wellnigh as tough as rope. It took much mustard to digest it. On two days a week no meat was eaten. Until his death Collingwood had a sordidness for salt junk and sixpenny. It was the nickname the senior officers in the fleet had for him. They loathed the dinner-parties he gave for their entertainment.

After the youngsters were roused in the morning, they had half an hour in which to wash out of a little tin basin, dress, black their boots, and make the berth shipshape for breakfast. Their day ended at 8 p.m. The morning was devoted to instruction, which the boy received from his uncle the Captain, "to whose regard for me, and to the interest which he took in whatever related to my improvement in nautical knowledge, I owe great obligations," Collingwood wrote shortly after Brathwaite's death in 1805.

*By courtesy of the Art Gallery Committee, Newcastle City Council*

The Royal Grammar School in the time of Hugh Moyses.

From a print in the Laing Art Gallery and Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.





He served with his uncle for a number of years, going with him from the *Shannon* first to the *Gibraltar* and later to the *Liverpool*. He was a slow pupil, but a thorough one. It took him five years, instead of the normal two, to qualify as a midshipman and strap a dirk to his hip. Like his father when he first engaged in trade, he stuck out his troubles and with much sweat and many pains he acquired a wide, deep, and practical knowledge of seamanship which he continued to improve until his death.

Collingwood had a remorselessly logical mind and perhaps he found the method of instruction given in the old textbooks a little difficult to follow. That, for instance, of Mungo Murray, who in his *Treatise on Shipbuilding and Navigation* published in 1754, wrote that after the latitude had been found by good observation, if it agreed with the latitude by account, it might be presumed that the longitude by account was true, but if there was any considerable difference, it might be feared there was likewise an error in the longitude, to correct which there could be no certain rule, while if the observed latitude and that by account did not agree, the only thing that could be done was to let the longitude go as by account or remark what it should have been, provided the error was in the course and supposing the distance to be true. It was certainly all very obscure, especially to one whose imagination, it was observed, was never "playful."

Collingwood's start was noticeably slow. At last, in 1767, moving with Brathwaite into the *Liverpool*, he was appointed master's mate. This office entailed the writing of the log-book, the heaving of the log, and the checking of the chronometers. By day he took charge of the lower deck, kept an eye on the buckets, and saw that the spittoons were duly used. He was also in command of the port-lids and had to see that they were regulated according to the weather, and was charged with the removal of sailors' hats and handkerchiefs from the port-sills. It was a step up, but by no means a big one.

## THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL COLLINGWOOD

He entered the naval service in 1770 for eleven years, chiefly in the Mediterranean, always fully engaged with congenial duties and the fleet. Then in 1772 he said good-bye to his native land, having been sent to the Mediterranean, where he gained great popularity from the command of the Captain's Guard, a body of 1200 seamen, all in gaudy white uniforms, and the most gallant to serve. After Trafalgar Pitt observed that Collingwood had "fully proved himself a gallant, zealous, and skilful friend of his country, and a just and judicious master to his men as much apparently by example as by precept and by rule," but it is a fact that the rest of the Admiralty could not bear Riddle's name before it, and that of Pitt.

Riddle was a good sailor, a man of energy of mind, a born leader of men, and for years at sea must have been equal to his task in the Mediterranean. He Captain had charge of the navy there, during the War of 1778, and survived all the other great naval officers of his day, though he died in 1805, while Pitt died in 1806, and the Admiralty treated both with respect. When Riddle was relieved from the Mediterranean, December, 1773, he recommended Collingwood to Admiral Sir John Jervis, then in the orders for America, and in a few days the young man was on board the *Powder*, home for Boston, to correct the lamentable manners of those who had so enjoyed themselves at the Boston tea-party. This young pupil was soon to prove himself.

## BUNKER HILL

GRAVES and his contingent arrived at Boston in July to find it a city beleaguered. Crack regiments, eager to fight, were shut up within the town by a crowd of 20,000 casual demonstrators who gathered whenever they had a day or two to spare from every part of Massachusetts and returned to their homes when they grew bored. The British had cannon, stores, and ammunition. The Navy had come to back them. Every ship from England brought a dribble of reinforcements to swell their numbers. All ranks were impatient to travel what they thought was an easy path to glory. The one thing lacking was a plan. Gage, the Governor, had only the vaguest instructions from the Home Government to guide him. Instead of orders he was sent a plethora of generals and major-generals, similarly un instructed. Before they left for America the Cabinet would invite them to dinner. Every subject was discussed on these occasions except the Transatlantic situation.

Gage's general staff, despite its superabundance of talent, was incapable of coming to a decision. Officers in gorgeously embroidered uniforms went from barracks to the coffee-houses and from there to the homes of the Boston loyalists breathing fire and entreating with unwearied fervour someone somewhere for the love of God to do something. Nothing ever was done. Gage wavered like a weathercock. He received a thousand contradictory suggestions. On one point only were they agreed: the army must have elbow room.

How to obtain it? In theory Gage had but to reach out his hand to win a prize as easy as any ever offered to a soldier. The odds were stacked in his favor. The odds on a British victory, complete, crushing, as I consider it, were overwhelming. Yet Gage was in capable of initiating a campaign. He had but the weaker plan, and no idea what to do.

He studied the map, he studied through his glasses Boston, he saw, by between two points to be in the claws of a vice. Both points he viewed as alike in size and shape. They were covered with low hills, afford a good strategical position to any force so situated as to occupy them, and were joined to the mainland by narrow necks of land across which crossed the Charles River. The Heights of Dorchester rose on the left, one thousand feet, and the other was the village of Charlestown, with its wooded slopes, interrupted by a ridge of hills. The greater height in this ridge was Bunker Hill, whose summit rises 100 feet above the sea at mid-tide. A lower spur to the east was known as Breed's Hill. About five hundred yards of salt water separated the two peninsulas from Boston. Gage, peering through his glasses, could not decide which of these two points he should first occupy.

For twelve months the military leaders strutted about Boston demanding elbow-room and discussing on which headland they should begin operations. Their predicament was similar to that of the *ass* which found itself midway between the bay and the carrots. The unfortunate beast starved to death. Collingwood, still a midshipman, kicked his heels on the deck of the *Preston*, inactive like the rest of the navy. Their purpose at Boston was to keep the port closed, but the ships were at their lowest peace-time strength. Their task was too much for them. They were flouted daily by colonial craft and their efforts at frustration served only to heighten the war-fever of the Yankees.

The winter dragged on. Each week saw the Americans bolder and more determined. The major-generals were now

rabid to take the bounce out of their tormentors. The army, cooped up in Boston, was stifling for breath. There was no practical reason why the town should not have been evacuated. The real strategic centre was New York. But once having occupied Boston, the soldiers' pride would not permit them to withdraw in the ships until they had shown their prowess.

Gage was still no nearer a solution of his problem. What lay beyond the range of his glass? He decided to disguise the officers and send them out into Massachusetts as spies. It was one way to be rid of them.

In April at Lexington, twenty miles away, came the first letting of blood. The result of the skirmish was to aggravate the bottling-up process. The army became desperate. Gage's elbows, for all the room they had, might have been pinioned in a strait jacket. Two more months passed. There were now more than 6000 picked soldiers under his command in the town. Longer and longer he pored over his maps. Then at last he made up his mind. He would occupy the Heights of Dorchester. By all the rules of war this was the position which the colonists, pushing forward their war plans, ought soon to attack. The headland was the more easily accessible for them than its twin on the north, it would be the easier to hold, and was better situated for damaging the garrison in Boston. The die was cast. Gage sighed with relief and relaxed for a time.

Alas, the space of a few years separated him from the work of a poet who might have warned him of the frequent fate of the plans of mice and men. Gage's prolonged deliberations had overlooked one thing. He was not fighting professional soldiers, but amateurs. They did not conduct warfare according to the text-books of military pontiffs. Their ideas of strategy were their own. At the same time as the Governor of Massachusetts made up his mind, the Committee of Public Safety of the Massachusetts Congress unanimously recommended the Council of War to occupy Bunker Hill.

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He studied the neighbour-hood through his glass. Boston, he saw, lay between two peninsulas as in the closing jaws of a vice. Both peninsulas were cut off in size and shape. They were crusted with red loam, affording good strategical positions to anyone who cared to occupy them, and were joined to the mainland by narrow necks of bad roads which earthworks had been built. The Neck of Dorchester was on the lower, or western, jaw; on the other was the village of Charlestown, with its wooden houses, overtopped by a ridge of hills. The greatest height in this ridge was Bunker Hill, whose summit was 110 feet above the sea at its base. A lower spur to the east was known as Breed's Hill. About five hundred yards of salt water separated the two peninsulas from Boston. Gage, peering through his glass, could not decide which of these two points he should first occupy.

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The Colonials acted swiftly. They showed that quality of hustle which their descendants were to make notorious but which Gage and his advisers so sadly lacked. The advice of Congress was carried out without a moment's loss.

Congress made its decision on June 15, three days after Gage had proclaimed a state of martial law. By the following evening 1200 Yankees had mustered on Cambridge Common. They were armed, but barely a dozen of them knew what battle plan had been prepared. Patiently they listened to the President of Harvard College praying for God's blessing on their unknown mission.

The sun set. In the gathering dusk of a summer night the column of men began their march. Colonel Prescott, the commander, whose ability had once prompted the British authorities to offer him a commission in the regular army, rode at the head of the file. His resources were meagre, but he trusted them perfectly. His only artillery comprised six small cannon dragged along in the rear of the marchers. The guns were lost among the carts containing entrenching tools for all out that night. None of the marchers wore uniform and they carried no flag. They had for equipment their blankets, bullets they had cast themselves, dark lanterns, and one day's rations. It was realised there was a shortage of powder. The weapons for the most part were antiquated firelocks with barrels of astonishing length. But Prescott's faith in the human material he commanded was unshaken. His followers were tall men, quiet and muscular, whose faces were set purposefully. He could see no reason for being afraid.

The commander struck up to the summit of Bunker Hill and pressed along the ridge to Breed's Hill before he halted his troop. There was a moment's pause while the marchers regained their breath. They looked at the night scene and saw, immediately below them, the yellow panes of Charlestown cottage windows, then the lanterns of the British men-of-war

riding at anchor in the Channel, and, beyond, the lights of Boston like yellow stars studding the darkness. The Boston batteries were only 1200 yards away, the men-of-war still nearer. All this the colonists took in at a glance. Then they stacked their firelocks, seized the spades and pickaxes they had brought in the carts, and in utter silence, with never a pause in their furious haste, began to dig the dew-moistened ground. Only the sentries, pacing to and fro, did not dig. Prescott and his officers, mingling with the rest, laboured like navvies and set the pace. . . .

Collingwood, running on to the deck of the *Preston* next morning, glanced to the north and saw, where the previous evening there had been pastureland, a small but strong-looking redoubt, guarded by trenches and a breastwork six feet high. He could not believe his eyes. Nor could anyone in Boston. The incredible had happened. The British had been forestalled. The *Lively* frigate, without waiting for orders, expressed the general indignation by beginning at once unceremoniously to bombard the fort. Graves took the hint and from his flag-ship made the signal to prepare for action. The drummers beat out the tune of "Hearts of Oak" which called all hands to quarters. Collingwood, springing to his post, knew that at last he was to receive his baptism of fire. He had waited so long—he was in his twenty-seventh year—that now he felt little excitement. Certainly he did not quail. It was remarkable how clear-headed he felt. All his senses were functioning acutely. He set to coolly and without flurry.

As the ships in the squadron manœuvred into line their decks were cleared. The guns were unlashed. The gunners stripped to the waist and bound their black silk handkerchiefs tightly round their ears as a safeguard against deafness. The powder boys were formed in relays. Tubs of burning matches, for firing the guns, were brought out. The tubs were filled with sand and the matches, whose heads were of twisted cotton soaked in lye, were three feet in length. The port-lids

were struck open and a line of eighty guns pouted their red-ringed mouths at the little redoubt on the hill.

The noise when they opened fire was exasperating. Added to the explosion of the guns was the banging of their carriages against the decks and all the uproar and hullabaloo of battle. Each ship was burning more than five hundred pounds of powder a minute. The murk blew in Collingwood's eyes and filled his lungs. Yet he was not disturbed. He had entered his element.

Those in Boston were at last galvanised into action. The general staff was hurriedly summoned. All were agreed that the Yankees' impudence must be sternly dealt with. Accordingly the army would attack and keep on attacking until the rebels ran like whipped eurs. By all means let the Navy bombard the redoubt—patently a gimmerack affair—while troops were ferried across the Channel to Charlestown. Then, in its own good time, the army would complete the debacle with a frontal attack on the position. The conference broke up highly satisfied with itself.

From the shore and the height of Cop's Hill within the Boston precincts howitzers, mortars, and other field artillery added their fire to that from the ships. As the tide came in the floating batteries stationed in the harbour moved into position and increased the bombardment.

The redoubt proved to be not such a ramshackle affair after all. Part of it at any rate was cannon proof, while many of the bombarding guns found the elevation at which it was placed too great for them. Nevertheless, the men within its walls were sorely tried. Some, it is true, had seen military service, but the others had come straight from the land and the carpenter's bench, from felling trees in the woods and the grinding of corn. A chain is as strong as its weakest link. A crowd is as brave as its most timid individual. The ordeal of those on Breed's Hill was beyond all imagination. The undisciplined defenders found themselves translated to the very

heart of hell. They had no means of retaliation. They lay within their fort while from sea and shore death in a terrifying form enveloped them.

Israel Putnam, in the Massachusetts Congress, had said that the Americans were not afraid of their heads, though very much afraid of their legs. If these were covered they would fight for ever. Prescott had provided leg protection for his men, yet he had difficulty in maintaining their morale. Then when fear clutched them with its iciest hands there came respite from the least expected quarter.

By one o'clock twenty companies of the Grenadiers and Light Infantry under General Howe and two battalions under General Pigot had been landed on the extreme east of the peninsula, a little to the north of Charlestown. The landing place was the foot of Breed's Hill on its most difficult face. General Howe, the hero, twenty-six years earlier, of Quebec, was in command. It was Howe who led the forlorn hope of twenty-four men who seized the entrenched path threading the Heights of Abraham and cleared it for Wolfe's advancing column. Now he numbered his men and decided they were not enough to do the day's work with sufficient thoroughness. The flotilla of barges was sent back for reinforcements. The noon heat was scorching. The attackers were beyond the range of those within the redoubt. Howe ordered his men to rest and eat their dinner. They need not hurry. The whole afternoon was before them.

In the lull, Collingwood was sent from the *Preston* to the shore at the head of a party of seamen with orders to maintain the supply of ammunition for the army. "I never witnessed a fiercer struggle," he said of Bunker Hill at a time when the memory of Trafalgar and St. Vincent were uppermost in his mind. The day's events cut deeply into his consciousness and in the contrast between British and American tactics he learned much that he never forgot.

By three o'clock the barges had brought back two additio-

battalions. Howe was satisfied. He had now a force of about 2500 excellent troops, famous for their training and discipline. They were fresh and their blood was up. It was all over, bar the shouting. "I shall not," Howe told his followers in a final homily, "desire you to go a step further than where I go myself." Then he led them in three columns up the hill on its steepest face through hay thigh-high whose pungent scent rose in heady waves. The troops moved slowly forward in full marching kit. In spite of the heat and the gradient they were burdened with their thick uniforms, their blankets, weapons, and knapsacks filled with three days' rations, for the major-generals had decided that the Yankees must be pursued far and wide. The hill-side was crossed with fences barring the advance.

As the soldiers mounted the hill the colonists in Charlestown poured a withering musketry fire into their ranks. Gage ordered the artillery in Boston to counter this by heating their shot and bombarding the village. The wooden shacks of Charlestown went up in fire and smoke during the afternoon. This bombardment prevented the Americans from supporting their countrymen on the summit of Breed's Hill. The band of brothers within the redoubt were left to face as best they could the advance of the world's best troops, who outnumbered them by more than two to one.

The British, drawn up in three long lines, marched shoulder to shoulder up the slope. Howe commanded on the left. Pigot had charge of the right. Eight cannon that had been brought over from Boston attempted ineffectively to cover the advance of the red-coats.

Progress was slow. The soldiers fired off their muskets long before they were within shooting distance. It was all that Prescott and his officers could do to prevent their men from copying this example. The Americans had not a bullet or a pinch of powder to spare. Israel Putnam, against whom Howe was advancing, threatened to cut down the next colonist

who fired before the order to do so was given. Those in command of the redoubt ran round the parapet kicking up the barrels of the firelocks to prevent their owners letting off their weapons prematurely. Prescott implored his men to fire low and to wait until they could clearly distinguish one uniform from another. Someone unknown coined a phrase that became classic. "Fire when you see the whites of their eyes," he growled, translating the instructions into vivid language all could understand.

When at last Prescott gave the order, the result was devastating. The British were mown down in swathes like the hay through which they had just passed. It was equivalent to modern machine-gun fire against troops advancing in close formation. The Yankees were under cover. The soldiers' fire, unlike the artillery bombardment, could be disregarded by the men in the redoubt and behind the breastwork.

The colonists picked off their victims at will, aiming with slow deliberation. The poorer shots loaded the firelocks and thrust them into the hands of the recognised marksmen. They coolly allotted their targets among themselves. In their eyes the approaching soldiers were the trained bullies of a tyrant power whose object was to enslave them and their kinsfolk. They were most bitter against the officers, who were closest to the governing body whose policy had brought about the clash. They knew them at once by the glitter of their finery and picked them off with cold intention. In every quarter of the field the attack failed.

Collingwood at the foot of the hill saw at the first volley companies lose three-quarters of their men, others as many as nine-tenths. Companies he had seen march off at an average strength of thirty-nine men were left with eight or nine survivors. In some only three, four or five remained. Fifteen minutes of this were enough to show Howe the uselessness of continuing the attack. He had been in battles before which began badly but ended well. He withdrew his troops,

gave them a breathing space in which to resume their parade ground formation, then once more led them up the hill.

There was no change of tactics. The red-coats were still overladen and allowed to fire haphazardly against the mounds of earth protecting the colonists. The hill-side was littered with fallen men. The soldiers altered their marching step to avoid treading on the bodies of their comrades. It was the only acknowledgment they made of the repulse they had suffered.

The Yankees had been heartened by their first success. There was no need now to beg them to withhold their fire. They learned their lessons quicker than the English. This time they waited until the red-coats were only forty yards away. Then a continuous hail of lead was aimed at the white belts of the enemy. To the midshipman on the shore, pausing for a moment in his task of urging the seamen to bring up more and more supplies of powder, it seemed that an unbroken line of flame was pouring from the summit of the hill. The royal troops stumbled and fell. The piles of dead and wounded mounted fearfully. Those who remained of the officers waved their swords and dashed forward urging on their men. Discipline was as strong as ever. Veterans without rank but seasoned with experience took the place of the slaughtered leaders. Howe had begun the fight with a personal staff of twelve. Every one of them was killed. No one could live within range of the fire that came from the breast-work. Again the red-coats fell back.

But now, with his army winnowed, Howe had learned what to do. Back once more on the landing-place, the English were joined by four hundred marines who had been rushed up in the emergency. Howe ordered his men to take off their knapsacks and blankets, to charge the hill, and to bayonet the enemy when they gained the redoubt. He was stubbornly determined that at all costs he would reach the summit and stay there. Every corps under him had been broken in the two

previous assaults, yet the men who were left were of the same mind as their commander. Their courage was as magnificent as that of the colonists.

For the third time the red-coats advanced up the slope through the trampled hay, leaping over the dead, heedless of the wounded crying for water or begging a bayonet thrust to end their agony. Only the rump of an army went forward now. But its spirit was unbroken. Perhaps nothing could ever break it.

The colonists had shot their bolt. Reinforcements were denied them by the bombardment of Charlestown. Many had emptied their powder horns. None had bayonets with which to resist at close quarters.

Once more as the British came within range every bullet fired at them found a mark. The front rank crumpled. But this time the fire was not so sustained. Something was different. Suddenly there was utter silence. The last shot had been fired. The soldiers dashed forward unhindered. In a moment they were up and over the colonists' defence. Their bayonets came into play against the defenceless Americans. The dust from the parched ground rose in suffocating clouds. Prescott could only retire, first on to Bunker Hill and then on to the mainland. It was over. The British at last were masters of the summit. But they made no attempt at pursuit.

A tenth of those who had defended the redoubt were dead. Two hundred and seventy-one others were wounded and thirty had been taken prisoners. Five of the six cannon were captured. The British losses were shocking. They numbered, Collingwood heard, 1154, of whom 251 were dead. Of the officers who had fought that day, twenty-seven had been killed and sixty-eight wounded. A string of carriages, sent from Boston to bring back the casualties, did not end all night, so many did they have to carry. The path to glory those shattered men had trod so eagerly that morning had led

them to its inevitable end. The elbow room they had demanded had resolved itself into six feet of earth.

But the occasion brought Collingwood promotion. The ammunition supply had never failed. That was something. Graves took him out of the *Preston* and gave him the rank of Fourth Lieutenant in the *Somerset*. He had won his spurs in his first engagement.

## NELSON

**G**RAVES might be satisfied with Collingwood, but the Admiralty was very much dissatisfied with Sir Samuel. Four months after Bunker Hill, despatches reached Boston suspending the Admiral from his command. Collingwood went back with him to England. Again Roddam had to intervene on his behalf. Sir Peter Parker, commander-in-chief of the West Indian squadron, gallantly responded, with the result that Collingwood was appointed lieutenant in the sloop *Hornet*, under Captain Haswell, for service in the West Indies.

A lieutenant was next in power and rank to the Captain and his deputy upon occasion. The work was responsible and arduous. To him fell the task of working the ship, upholding discipline, and navigating the vessel as the Captain might direct. He had to keep the crew up to scratch and the midshipmen and master's mates in order. The look-out men had to be prevented from falling asleep, and for this reason he had to see that they were not left too long at their posts. His special charge was a vigilant searching for strange sails. When he discovered these, the Captain was informed, and the vessel cleared for action.

The Lieutenant took note of any defects appearing in the ship and duly reported them to the Captain. If the Admiral signalled, he had to reply and duly enter the messages in the log. Except in action, he was charged with preventing all "profane Swearing and abusive Language, all Disturbance,

Noise, and Confusion." Generally, he had to wet-nurse the men, instruct them in musketry, and see to the cleanliness and fighting ability of the ship. Collingwood now wore a sword instead of a dirk, and was properly proud of his long-tailed, bright blue coat with its white cuffs and lapels, gold buttons, and his white waistcoat, white knee-braces, and white stockings.

He had grown into a solemn-faced man, slow-moving and reticent. The "prettiness and gentleness" and the other "ladylike" qualities, which the boy Eldon had noted in his schoolmate, had vanished. The sea had hardened and roughened him. His spare figure had grown to a little above average height. The features of his face were somewhat heavy, but his large dark eyes were alert and fearless. He was not given to jokes and those he did crack in rare moments were singularly ponderous. He had, however, a liking for puns. He was at this time introspective and moody. And he had a temper which was as sudden as gunpowder.

Haswell and his lieutenant failed to hit it off. The Captain could not understand his reserved subordinate, who was ambitious and greedy for prize-money. The Lieutenant of the *Glasgow* had collected £500 in prize-money. One cruise alone had brought the officers of the *Winchelsea* £1500. But for the *Hornet* there was nothing. All around him Collingwood saw officers fairly "wallowing in their wealth acquired by prizes," he told his brother, William, "and so extraordinary an exception are we that to be as importunate as the *Hornet* is become a proverbial saying." Even the native girls jeered at their bad luck and mentioned it in their comic songs. Luck was to blame only in so far as it had placed him, Collingwood thought, under the command of a man who took all the pains he could to make himself detested.

There was not a member of his crew who did not think that removal would be as good as a promotion. Midshipmen and mates alike quitted the ship, outraged by the indignities

to which Haswell submitted them. Work was piled in consequence on Collingwood's shoulders, for he was left without a single assistant. Yet his tiredness was as nothing compared to the smarts inflicted on his mind by the overbearing vanity and meanness of the Captain.

"Diffidence, humility, and the idea I have of strict subordination caused me to retreat before the face of tyranny," Collingwood wrote home melodramatically, "until my heart smote me: my spirit reproved me for submitting to a treatment that a slave would have shown resentment at, and I told him (Haswell) I was determined no longer to bear with his capricious humours: that I was not a mark to shoot his spleen at, and desired him, did he disapprove of any part of my conduct to explain himself. . . . He had not a word to say, and I had a respite from his malign broils. Not that they ceased, but he kept out of my way." His lieutenant likened him to a daw in peacock's plumage.

Finally something was said that touched the gunpowder to an explosion. Haswell promptly had him court-martialled at Port Royal, eighteen months after Collingwood had joined the *Hornet*. The charges he brought were vague and general. He accused the Lieutenant of sulkiness, want of alacrity, and spiritlessness. He alleged in effect that Collingwood had disobeyed his orders and neglected his duty.

Haswell's case proved flimsy under examination, but Collingwood himself did not show up to advantage. The court received the impression that there is no smoke without fire. In promulgating its findings, it acquitted the accused on all counts, but took the opportunity of administering a guarded rebuke. Collingwood was informed that he seemed to lack cheerfulness in carrying out his duties and it was suggested to him that he should conduct himself for the future with that alacrity which is so necessary for the carrying on of His Majesty's service.

No doubt Collingwood's real trouble at this time was

sexual starvation. He was young and healthy, but an inherent fastidiousness made port brothels unthinkable for him. His pent-up youth was chafing for an outlet.

The court martial shook him. For perhaps the only time in his life he was afraid. Naturally introspective he looked at himself with critical eyes and evolved, in the manner of the sermons he had written for Mr. Moises, a plan of conduct for the future. It lay, he decided, more within his own power than anyone else's to promote his own comfort and advancement. He must attend strictly to his duty, behave "respectfully and complacently" not only to his superiors but to everybody, and in this way capture their regard. If this did not bring preferment, then he must guard against letting disappointment sour him. Discontent would mean sorrow for his friends, triumph for his enemies, and good for no one.

Further, he must be foremost on all duty. It would not do to be a nice observer of turns. He would avoid drinking. He would shun the company of "low, vulgar, and dissipated men." Better by far to be alone than in mean company. Instead, he would read history and everything appertaining to his profession. He would delve into a standard dictionary and read what he could about the West Indies, comparing what he read with what he saw. Wisdom would surely come if sought for diligently. Thus equipped, his character would be established for life. . . .

To-day it sounds priggish, but he was living in an age when priggishness was the only antidote to viciousness. Collingwood's sentiments would have delighted Mr. Moises beyond measure. Eldon, if he had been a shipmate and had known, might have sneered.

But an event even more electrifying for Collingwood than the court martial was the arrival of Nelson in the West Indies. The impingement of the little man upon the Tynesider meant, in effect, a complete reorientation in mental outlook. He was fascinated, drawn out of himself, made over. Nelson keyed

up Collingwood and unlocked his mind. The North-countryman acquired an assurance, a belief in himself, that he had lacked before. In Nelson's company he was invigorated, stimulated, enlarged. Life became exciting.

The two young men were as temperamentally apart as north and south, mountain and plain, ice and fire. Yet weighed in the scales of friendship they balanced perfectly. Nelson might make fun of Collingwood, both to his face and behind his back, but he never went beyond the bounds of fun. Collingwood was his sheet anchor. He knew that he could in all circumstances count on his unfaltering loyalty. Collingwood's almost fanatical thoroughness was an antidote to his own dashing methods. The Tynesider, with his pedantic regard for detail, his solemnities, and steely rectitude, was a refuge where the frail youth from Norfolk, mercurial, haphazard, and sensual, was glad to shelter.

One link tied them. They were both diehard patriots in the sense of necessarily believing in their country, right or wrong. Their gospel was according to the laws of England as enacted by Parliament and published in the Admiralty Regulations and Instructions. The word "politic" was not in their vocabulary—if the Admiralty had declared otherwise. Theirs not to reason why. Theirs but to criticise, in the privacy of their own exclusive company, those elder seamen who connived at the flouting of parliamentary statutes. Much that was going on under their noses was intolerable to them. If only chance would come their way they would make a clean sweep, but it never did. They knew the profound shame of impotent youth.

They raced each other for promotion, Nelson leading by a short head all the way. Nelson had come out to the West Indies as a lieutenant in the *Lowestoffe*. Admiral Sir Peter Parker, responding to a plea from the little man's patron, Captain Locker, took him into his flagship, the *Bristol*. There was a vacancy to be filled. Collingwood was allowed to turn

his back on the insufferable Captain Haswell and move into the *Lowestoffe*.

The friends, spurred on by their long, earnest, highfalutin, rousing talks, and gently pushed by Parker, shot up rank by rank. They reached the degree of First Lieutenancy and still there was no stopping them. Nelson was made commander of the *Badger* brig in December, 1778, and Collingwood took his place in the *Bristol*. Six months later Nelson was given command of the *Hinchinbrook* and Collingwood took over the command of the *Badger*. Finally, when Nelson was promoted to the *Janus*, Collingwood became captain of the *Hinchinbrook*, carrying twenty-eight guns. It had been a breathless race. Henceforward the pace would be slower, but it would not end until Trafalgar when, with Nelson dead, Collingwood became commander-in-chief.

The *Hinchinbrook*, when Collingwood joined her, was in the Rio San Juan in Central America, where fever had proved too much for Nelson.

General Dalling, Governor of Jamaica, had conceived the spectacular plan of cutting in half Spain's colonial empire in America and of severing its communications north and south. The forts in the river were to be captured, the Lake of Nicaragua reached, and the treasure city of Granada on its shores seized. In this way the Spanish main would be disrupted, rich prizes would be won, and England would have a way into the Pacific. Unfortunately the expedition developed into an epic of mismanagement. No one had sailed the San Juan river, except the Spaniards themselves, since the days of the buccaneers.

The venture was planned with the aid of inaccurate maps and insufficient information. It was conceived at the very worst possible season in the year, for San Juan was reached in the last few weeks of the dry season when the river was at its lowest and its navigation was impeded by vast white sandbanks which threw back the sun's rays in a blinding

dazzle. The heat was hellish. In the open, the men were blistered; in the shade of the thick forest on the river's banks there was no air. Fever soon broke out. The weakened men were forced again and again to sap their diminished strength by dragging the boats over the shoals. And when the sun went down the scorched bodies were drenched and frozen by heavy night dews.

Nelson caught the contagion, but Captain Glover providentially died and the command of his ship, the *Jamus*, was offered him. Collingwood was sent out to take his place.

He arrived to find that the expedition had stormed the forts but was ravaged by sickness. The fort at San Juan was worse than a prison for all the comfort it afforded the stricken men. The filth and squalor within the walls was appalling. Huts which had to serve as hospitals were next door to a shambles from which putrifying hides and carcasses sent up a nauseating stench. A plague of flies maddened the sick men. The dry season had passed and now the rains deluged the English. Three and four times a day they were soaked to the skin. There were no medicines and the food supply ran out.

Monkeys had to be shot and boiled for broth. Their appearance in the stew-pots was hideously revolting. Collingwood was thankful for his cast-iron stomach. Men dropped dead on the march and their comrades saw their bodies putrefy before they had finished digging them a grave. Brutes leaped from the jungle and pounced on the corpses. Snakes swinging from tree branches bit them as they passed. The danger from snakes and poisoned water was acute. Those who fell victims died in violent pain. Many went raving mad. The starving men grew so weak from fever, hunger, and exhaustion that they could not raise strength enough to bury the dead. The stinking bodies were either thrown into the river or left unattended.

Men watched with leaden eyes the bodies of their friends

being gnawed by beasts of prey or torn by carrion birds with blood-smeared beaks and claws. Eighteen hundred persons set out on the expedition. Only 380 returned. The transport men all died. Many ships, having not a man left alive to care for them, sank at their moorings in San Juan Harbour. It made no matter. Those who had brought them to this equatorial plague-spot were dead. Someone had blundered.

From April until August Collingwood toiled, his granite constitution unimpaired, until the order came for his release.

Back in the West Indies he learned that Nelson had left for England to recuperate, but the new tempo to which Collingwood was now living did not slow up. He was soon transferred to the *Pelican*, a small frigate of twenty-four guns. He quickly put those guns to use. The *Le Cerf*, a French frigate with eight guns fewer than his own, came across his course proudly shepherding a prize, the Glasgow merchantman *Blanford*, carrying a valuable cargo. Collingwood set to with a will. His twenty-four guns roared and belched. Sixteen others made vigorous reply. The frigates shook and rocked. They were hidden in a cloud of black smoke shot with flame. The sailors sweated, the officers swore, the guns crashed and boomed. Collingwood's twenty-four were too many for the *Le Cerf*. She yielded and her prize came back to Britain.

His next adventure in the *Pelican* was not so happy. The frigate was shipwrecked. Collingwood was cruising to the south-west of Jamaica when he ran into the disastrous hurricane of August, 1781. Two men-of-war, the *Ulysses* and the *Southampton*, had their masts and rigging torn down and in Port Royal harbour more than a hundred merchantmen were blown on to the beach in the historic gale. As for the *Pelican* all the seamanship of which Collingwood was capable could not save her from being piled up on the rocks and reef of the Morant Cays, a group of tiny islands about seventy miles out of Kingston Harbour.

It was black night when the frigate grounded. The wind

was tremendous and raised furious seas. Pounded by the waves, her yards smashed, the guns torn from their lashings and crashing against the ship's sides, the *Pelican* was helpless. She reared and plunged with a horrible rolling motion. As each wave struck her, she shivered along her whole length. Ports, masts, and timbers were crushed, splintered, and uprooted. Then there was a shuddering jolt and the vessel stopped. The wind-torn sea dashed against her in wave after thudding wave. The crew were drenched in the boiling, stinging spray. The *Pelican* began to break up. There was no telling what to do in the dark.

When dawn came, Collingwood saw his vessel was fast on a formidable reef. In front was a crescent of low, sandy cliffs, about eight feet in height, topped by some shrubs and a few coco-nut trees. A house stood out plainly on the ridge in front. It was the home of Dr. and Mrs. Corrall, relatives of his. There was sanctuary; his problem was to reach it in this fury of boiling seas, shrieking wind, and blinding spray. He ordered rafts to be made of the broken rigging, and on these succeeded in getting off the whole of his ship's company. Food was scarce on the island. It was difficult to provide rations for the rescued. Ten days of hardship were endured before a boat could reach Jamaica and help be brought. At last the *Diamond* frigate came out and retrieved the haggard, hungry men.

The loss of the *Pelican* left Collingwood for some time without a command. He had to compete with at least one hundred captains all scrambling for ships. Preference was given not to seamanship and zeal, but to those with the weightiest interest, and that was an advantage he lacked. But when a ship was eventually found for him it was a good one. This was the *Samson*, of sixty-four guns, to which he was appointed in 1782. Next year when peace was signed the vessel was paid off, but Collingwood was transferred to the *Mediator* and returned at once to the West Indies.

he left England there was nothing to indicate that he was about to reach one of the major turning-points in his life. Even the name of his ship was a misnomer.

He sailed with a grumble in his mind that he had been saddled with an extra household as passengers in his ships. They would be an expense to him and he hated to spend money without getting a return for it. People were always plaguing him to lend them money. "I can hardly supply myself," he told them grimly. He tried to console himself with the thought that as his passengers were also on their way to the West Indies they would have an opportunity for showing how thankful they were for favours received. It was not his passengers but Nelson and his brother Wilfrid who were to push him forward on the other side of the Atlantic. Three fierce patriots found themselves thirsting for blood in peace-time. If either of the three had been alone, it is probable that nothing would have happened. But together—something had to burst.

## CLEANING UP

THE combination, as a fighting force, was ideal. Nelson supplied the fire, Collingwood the moral fervour, and brother Wilfrid the brains. All three were contemptuous of the administration. They were appalled by the general slackness, for which they held the commander-in-chief, Admiral Sir Richard Hughes, responsible. They were shocked by his positive lack of dignity.

"He bows and scrapes too much for me. . . . The Admiral and all about him are ninnies," Nelson roundly declared. The brothers shared his opinion. Collingwood even infected Nelson with his teetotalism. Poor little Sandys, the good-natured captain of the *Latona*, was considered beyond the pale when it was seen that each day he went through a "regular course of claret." He was such a good-hearted fellow, none better, but his weakness was unforgivable, for, in the eyes of the reformers, it was symptomatic of all that was wrong with the station. They planned a thorough clean-up.

Wilfrid, captain of the *Rattler*, seemed to start the hare they chased so zealously. An excessive shyness made Wilfrid a shadowy personality. Nelson divined that Collingwood's brother was a man of exceptional ability—a fact which his official correspondence proves. We know little of him beyond the fact that he aged prematurely. Although junior to Cuthbert he was known in the service as "old" Collingwood, and as early as 1783, when he cannot have been more than

thirty-three or thirty-four, he had been taken for fifty years of age. An ability to work hard and the good order of his ship had already been noted, and when he left Portsmouth for the West Indies he was a marked man.

Wilfrid was not the prig that Cuthbert was. At least, he was not averse to sleeping with a woman, though a constitutional weakness—he was to die within a few years of tuberculosis—may have rendered him impotent. Cuthbert argued that such was the case when a Deptford prostitute applied to him for money to support a bastard that she claimed was his brother's. Nevertheless he made her a payment. The child was born exactly nine months after Wilfrid left London. The coincidence was too strong to be resisted and Cuthbert paid up.

Wilfrid, keeping all the time shyly in the background, initiated a campaign to put down smuggling in the West Indies. Nelson's inexhaustible energy carried it through and Cuthbert gave him unbudging support. Thus all three contributed according to their nature.

Wilfrid, studiously reading the Admiralty Regulations, found the excuse they desired. The excitement was intense. Nelson and Collingwood read and re-read their "bibles." They found it impossible to avoid concluding that the Navigation Act of 1672 reserving the trade of British colonies exclusively for British interests, applied equally to America as to France, Spain, and Holland. The Act required that sea-borne trade should be carried on in British-built vessels, owned entirely by British subjects, and navigated by a crew of which the Master and three-quarters at least of the crew were Britons.

The Declaration of Independence, the striking of the Union Jack, and the exiling of their loyalists all proved that the Yankees were foreigners. Yet they continued to trade in the most barefaced way with the West Indies. Hughes—that obsequious, shifty creature—did nothing, the Customs officials were silent, Governors and island presidents made no murmur.

*By courtesy of Mr. E. F. Collingwood*

A page from the Log Book of H.M.S. *Rattler*, commanded by Captain Wilfrid Collingwood.



The combination was outraged. Not only was the law being flouted, but the practice, they thought, was imperilling our chances in a future war. For if this trade was permitted to continue, the exiled loyalists, who had settled in Nova Scotia and had suffered the loss of their former homes and goods, would have a grave and legitimate grievance with the Home Country. They were being robbed of business which the law declared was theirs.

If the Yankee smugglers were not put down the loyalists would be ruined, their ships would be swept off the sea, and the Americans left unchallenged to step in and seize all they wished in the event of a French war. The Yankees were undercutting the loyalists and the West Indian residents were favouring them. There were many and powerful reasons why this illicit trading should be stopped. The three lay low and waited for their opportunity, scheming assiduously in preparation for its coming.

Their chance came in November, 1785. Hughes ordered the squadron to Barbados to inspect the anchorages and enquire if wood and fresh water were available for ships sheltering there. No word was mentioned of American smuggling. The combination decided that Nelson and Cuthbert should see Hughes together. Wilfrid remained outside. He knew the graft even better than the other two, but he was a lethargic young man in whom the seeds of tuberculosis were already germinating.

In Hughes' presence the two friends argued their case as to the manner born. They proved themselves accomplished sea lawyers. Hughes the fawning, the easy-going, found his defences suddenly shot to pieces.

They had read the orders he had sent them, Nelson told the Admiral, and wished to ask respectfully if the squadron was not to safeguard the country's commerce and see that the Navigation Laws were observed? Why else were men-of-war being kept at this station in time of peace?



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Hughes replied that he had no specific instructions on the point, nor had the Admiralty sent him any Acts of Parliament referring to it. He could not see that the suggested course came within the scope of their duties.

They retorted that the Navigation Act was included in the Admiralty Statutes sent to every captain. Admirals, captains, and senior officers were directed to see that it was carried into execution.

Hughes became evasive. He protested he had never seen the statute book. Nelson felt in his tail pocket. The statutes were produced, opened at the right place, and solemnly read over to him. Surely, in view of this, men-of-war were sent abroad for more than the mere show of parade? Hughes capitulated. The squadron received orders to enforce the Navigation Act.

The West Indies buzzed. A snake had entered Paradise. It was inconceivable that the British would really refuse to allow themselves to be hoodwinked any longer. Yankees, merchants, planters, and Customs officials, all whom the smuggling affected, felt that this outrage was impossible. When everything was so pleasant, surely these three young upstarts would not be permitted to meddle in what did not concern them? And yet . . . It quickly became plain that so far as Nelson and the two brothers were concerned their meddling was only beginning.

St. Kitts and St. Nevis, whither the combination sailed, soon felt the weight on their hands. The worst-hated ships in the fleet, the *Boreas*, the *Mediator*, and the *Rattler*, were cursed fluently and unceasingly. The combination persistently enquired why American ships were tied up at the quays. The excuses were varied and ingenious. To gain admittance the Yankees were prepared to swear, as the sea-phrase was, "through a nine-inch plank." They had sprung leaks or needed surgeons. Others made no pretence about their trading, but claimed that as their date of registry was

prior to the Declaration of Independence they were not subject to the Navigation Act. All these excuses the combination treated as eyewash and ordered all American ships from the harbours. Any foreign vessels found in port after a certain date would be seized.

The first brush with the smugglers was over the ship *Thomas*, whose master was asked by Wilfrid, operating in Basseterre Roads, St. Kitts, why he did not hoist his national flag. The *Thomas* belonged to North Carolina, and the master informed Wilfrid that the Collector of Customs had sanctioned the sale of her cargo and had desired him not to hoist his colours.

A month later, returning to Basseterre Roads after cruising off Antigua, Wilfrid found the brig *Chance* belonging to Rhode Island and the *Nanette* schooner belonging to Guadalupe importing goods and merchandise into St. Kitts. "Captain Collingwood's humanity," Nelson later informed the Admiralty, "would not allow him to seize those vessels as forfeited as they had been led into the predicament in which they then lay by the officers of the Customs."

"On January 7 (1785) I arrived in Basseterre Roads, where was laying the ship *Fanny* belonging to Connecticut. He had landed a part of his cargo under permission from the officers of the Customs, but as the importation was illegal, I ordered her to sail, not choosing to seize her as the master had been led into the snare by the officers of the Customs. . . . Whenever the men-of-war are absent for a few days constantly, when I returned have I received good information that three or four Americans had unloaded their cargoes and sailed."

Hughes was at once inundated with letters of indignation. He was caught between three devils and a raging sea. When Sir Thomas Shirley, Governor of the Leeward Isles, himself remonstrated, he chose to tackle the combination rather than the colonists. Orders were hurriedly despatched to the three reformers instructing them that if the Governor and the

various presidents of the islands were willing to let the Americans use the harbours, Yankees' ships must be free to enter and depart at will.

Shirley's protest was a facer for the combination. He had earlier told Nelson and Collingwood that he approved the methods they were carrying on for suppressing the illegal trade and assured them that he had done everything he could by proclamation and otherwise, to hinder it. Now he had gone over to the enemy. But the three would not budge.

Shirley and the presidents, advised of Hughes's move, began to lay down the law to Nelson and the brothers in letters that were little short of being orders. The combination soon "trimmed up" the presidents. While they had command of English men-of-war they would never allow themselves to be subservient to any Governor nor co-operate with him in doing illegal acts. Presidents of Council they felt themselves superior to. After all, they *knew* the Navigation Laws. . . .

The ratting of Hughes was another matter. It left them in a dilemma. Either they must mutiny or deny their Gospel, the Admiralty Regulations. They decided not to put their trust in princes, as represented by Admiral Sir Richard Hughes, but in their country which, they were certain, would not let them be ruined through protecting its commerce. The intrigue should go on and damn the consequences.

Hughes was apoplectic when he learned of their refusal. He wished at once to try them by court martial, but when he approached his other captains he found them on the side of the mutineers. What could he do? What would the terrible General Shirley do? Luckily for Hughes the colonists left him alone. Nelson was to be their victim. Claiming that English ships had no legal power to seize American vessels without instructions from the Customs, the Yankees sued Nelson for £40,000 damages. So that nothing should be left to chance but everything possible done to strengthen their

*By courtesy of*

Letter to his sister announcing the suppression of the American  
smuggling.



case the islanders subscribed to a fund on behalf of the prosecution.

Hughes thought it wisest to leave well alone. The combination, so harassed that they dared not leave their ships, appealed to the Admiralty.

"By copies of the vessels register," Nelson pointed out in an official statement of their case, "the vessels are all American built, and by the declaration of the masters and others *were*, and are now, in my opinion belonging to the subjects of the States of America, but wish to enjoy the privilege of British subjects, by having a free trade with our West Indian islands, to the prejudice of the British shipbuilding, British subjects, and the colonies of Nova Scotia and Canada." They had already been advised on the highest possible authority that the seizure of American ships was warranted and that they "need not apprehend but that you will be effectually supported and the business taken up seriously." Now that the emergency had come the response was gratifying. Their faith had not been misplaced. The Treasury itself undertook the costs of Nelson's defence. The trial completed their triumph. The illegal trading was put down, entailing a loss, Cuthbert believed, of £2000 a year to the Customs collector at Barbados alone. Governors and hangers-on lost fees and perquisites. "You may suppose," he remarked laconically, "the people are not very cordial with me."

The last act of the play was a masterpiece of irony. The Admiralty saw fit to congratulate Hughes on his zeal in enforcing the Navigation Acts. You never can tell how events will pan out.

## MARRIAGE

COLLINGWOOD returned home next year with the golden halo of his triumph still thick about him. The captain of the *Mediator* had made his mark. He had served in the navy for twenty-five years and had, what with Bunker Hill, San Juan, being shipwrecked, and the American smugglers, an excellent repertoire of stories with which to keep the merchants of Tyneside from the chimney corner on social occasions. Admiral Roddam was glad to renew acquaintanceship with his former protégé and to introduce him to that worthy alderman and Mayor-to-be of Newcastle, his son-in-law, John Erasmus Blackett, coal merchant and landowner. In Blackett's home he formed a pleasant friendship with one of his daughters, Sarah, a shy, pretty girl. He was seen more and more frequently in her company. Together they attended routs and dances (which he loathed), horse-races, picnics, and civic banquets. It was a slow courtship. At the end of four years of friendship they were understood to be engaged, though Sarah had yet to visit his home.

To his own family Collingwood was a stranger for there was a world of difference between the cake-loving schoolboy who had left home at thirteen years of age and the experienced naval officer who came back a quarter of a century later. Nevertheless he was welcomed by all and idolised by his own circle. Northumberland was eminently to his liking. Whether at Newcastle or travelling about the county he felt himself at

home. The sea, the West Indies, America, and the Spanish Main had not broken the ancestral ties which bound him to the soil of Northumberland.

All the same he did not yet realise that the town life which his father had chosen, the sea that was the lot of Wilfrid and himself, the Civil Service post which had fallen to his other brother, John, were all aberrations. Though he found himself powerfully attracted to that mode of life which the Collingwood family had followed for so many centuries he still regarded the sea as his proper element. A country house in Northumberland, an increasing family, the prestige of squirearchy, all this was a pleasing prospect, but yet not so sweet as life in the Service. He did not learn his mistake until years later.

The affair of Nootka Sound in 1790, four years after his return home, found him eager to leave Northumberland. To punish the Spaniards, two of whose men-of-war had seized British vessels off the north-west coast of America and made prisoners of the crews, England fitted out a fleet at a cost of £3,000,000. Collingwood buckled on his sword, and the moment the press was opened posted up to London, where he pulled every wire he could to obtain a command. He saw Chatham personally and prevailed upon his friends—particularly a Captain Conway—to second his application. Everyone was pushing claims for a ship, and Collingwood was careful to see that he was not elbowed out of sight. Mr. Stanhope at the Admiralty offered to assist, and, taking him at his word, Collingwood made an appointment on the spot to go with him again to Chatham. He went also to Lord Howe with an offer of his services. Eventually he was given the command of a thirty-two gun frigate, the *Mermaid*.

Going to sea once more filled him with excitement. He was enchanted with the prospect of using again all his nautical belongings. Elaborate instructions were given to his sister regarding their packing and despatch. His linen must go into one trunk, his plans, draft books, books on Signals and

Navigation into another. He remembered that one of his three spy-glasses was wrapped in an old glove. They must all be found and sent on to him, carefully rolled in his cloaks to prevent their coming to harm. His quadrant must be placed in his chest, with his *Shakespeare* and the *Spectator*. His newest teaspoons, his plain spoons, and his "fish thing," four pairs of sheets, the table-cloths he kept for sea use, and his new shoes must all be forwarded, but he would dispense with his cruet and his heavy candlesticks. Different friends subscribed to his larder such dainties as pickles, cherry brandy, currant jelly, ketchups, and sauces.

His sisters were also called upon to help him in the task of manning the *Mermaid*. They were required to write in his name to Mr. Wood, in Banffshire, whose address he had lost, instructing the lieutenant to join him immediately and bring with him any volunteer seamen he could obtain. They had also to ask Mr. Ingham to come with fifteen or twenty volunteers. His servant William, who had gone off to India, had returned and was going with him in the *Mermaid*. Othello had his occupation back.

He had for company a dog, "as tall as a table," who was a "charming creature." It enjoyed sea life and delighted Collingwood by its habit of swimming after him when he went out in his launch. He had also his memories of his sweetheart, Sarah. He puzzled how to conquer her persistent diffidence. She dreaded going to see his sisters, and yet assured him that she wished very much to be well acquainted with them. They must encourage her. How would it be if they invited her to drink tea in his sister Dorothy's own room? That would be friendly, intimate. She would not need to be afraid of formality in such circumstances. The ice would be broken and she would quickly lose her reserve.

He was careful to explain to those at home why he had accepted the command of a frigate instead of holding out for a line-of-battle ship to which he was entitled. In a battleship



*By courtesy of Libraries Committee, Newcastle City Council*

Sarah Blackett, afterwards Lady Collingwood.  
From a miniature in the Central Public Library, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



he would have received £200 a year more in pay, but he hoped to make up that and more in prize money. If he had insisted on a sixty-four gun ship the odds were, he thought, that he would have been employed all the time in convoy work, with all its attendant worry, lack of glory, and absence of prizes. Convoying was only negative work. Moreover, sixty-fours, as the weakest ships, were always the ones dispensed with when a detachment had to be made and they were likely to be sent off to India. These were risks he would not take. Once let him get into the West Indies and he would make the Spaniards refund to him twice a month that £200 a year he was sacrificing.

It was always his practice to act as father confessor to his men. While he was fitting out, a letter came into his hands that "astonished and provoked" him. The mother and sister of one of his Newcastle seamen had gone to a dumb woman fortune-teller whose reading of their future had left them in the utmost distress. They could not disbelieve her, for had she not read their past faultlessly? Then she had gone on to tell them that their man "wenched, drank, and revelled in every kind of debauchery and licentiousness; that he got a very great deal of money and sent none home to his poor mother; that his soul and body were equally in a state of ruin." If, however, he would lay his money out on good things for his mother and something pretty for his sister they would forgive him and be kind to him as they used to be. "What is all this," Collingwood demanded of his sister, to whom he recounted the letter, "but inciting him to steal and thieve those things which he is told are alone to make his peace with them? This comes of educating improperly such people whose proper province is industry and labour."

Once again he was sent to the West Indies. But the affair fizzled out. Before anyone had an opportunity to win glory or make a fortune out of prize money the Spaniards made

amends and the affair was over. Collingwood was paid off.

It seemed that the millennium had arrived. There was no sign that he could see of future employment for a fighting man. Back he went to Northumberland and philosophically prepared to accept squirearchy as his natural lot in a peaceful world.

But first he must find a wife. Having discovered the need, he soon found himself in love for the first time in his life. He could not still his aching longing for Sarah Blackett, daughter of John Erasmus and Roddam's granddaughter. She was a sweet, kind, sunny-tempered woman with the sea in her blood and enough perception to realise that under Collingwood's cold demeanour and icy reserve was a heart as warm and sentimental as a schoolboy's. She recognised, too, that he had a gift of loyalty that was altogether exceptional.

Blackett's daughter was a placid girl with a talent for contentment. Collingwood never knew her to say a harsh or a hasty word to anyone. With his sense of his own irritability this was a quality of great value to him. Nor did she tease. A teasing woman, in his eyes, was the devil. However long the service might keep him from her in the course of their married life Sarah never complained. She knew that "the times required" her husband to be abroad and that "it was proper she should be at home."

In contrast to the solemn-minded sailor, she delighted in frivolities such as dress and dancing. Yet the two perfectly understood each other and, understanding, could tolerate and enjoy. There is little doubt that in a worldly sense the daughter of the wealthy John Erasmus could have made a far better match, but she preferred someone quite different. Her choice laid the foundations of a love-affair which the Victorians were pleased to believe would be immortal. But then the Victorians had such quaint notions. Did they

not conveniently slur Nelson's love-affair with Emma Hamilton?

Cuthbert speeded up his wooing. On Thursday, June 18, 1791, Captain Collingwood of His Majesty's frigate *Mermaid*, was married at St. Nicholas' Cathedral, Newcastle-on-Tyne, the church of his baptism, to Sarah, daughter of John Erasmus Blackett, Esquire, the Right Worshipful Mayor of Newcastle. A settlement of £6250 was made upon the marriage.

They made their home in a plain house, built of brick, in Oldgate Street, Morpeth. It was a large house with high airy rooms, a fine staircase, good stabling, and ground enough to enable Collingwood to carry out experiments in afforestation. He had much spare time and he occupied it by planting and cultivating oak trees. The river Wansbeck flowed by the side of his garden. He believed his house was "good and strong built" and that it would be a good house after his time. It still stands. One half of it is occupied by the Morpeth Constitutional Club and the other half by the Roman Catholic priest as a presbytery. Here in May, 1792, his eldest daughter Sarah was born, to be followed by a second child, May Patience, in 1793. Then the French prevented the fulfilment of his hope of an increasing family.

Indeed he had already left home by the time the younger girl was born. He felt some anxiety for his wife as her confinement became due; but he judged she was in good hands and so he hoped for the best. His place was at sea. Once he had chosen the child's name his share was finished. He decided that if it was a girl she should be called Mary, after his sister, and Patience after his sister-in-law. If it was a boy then he should take his own name, Cuthbert. His cousin, Mr. Edward Collingwood, of Chirton, and Sir Edward Blackett agreed to be the godfathers and his sister Mary and Mrs. Carlyle the godmothers.

In the meantime, so long as he remained at home, Collingwood

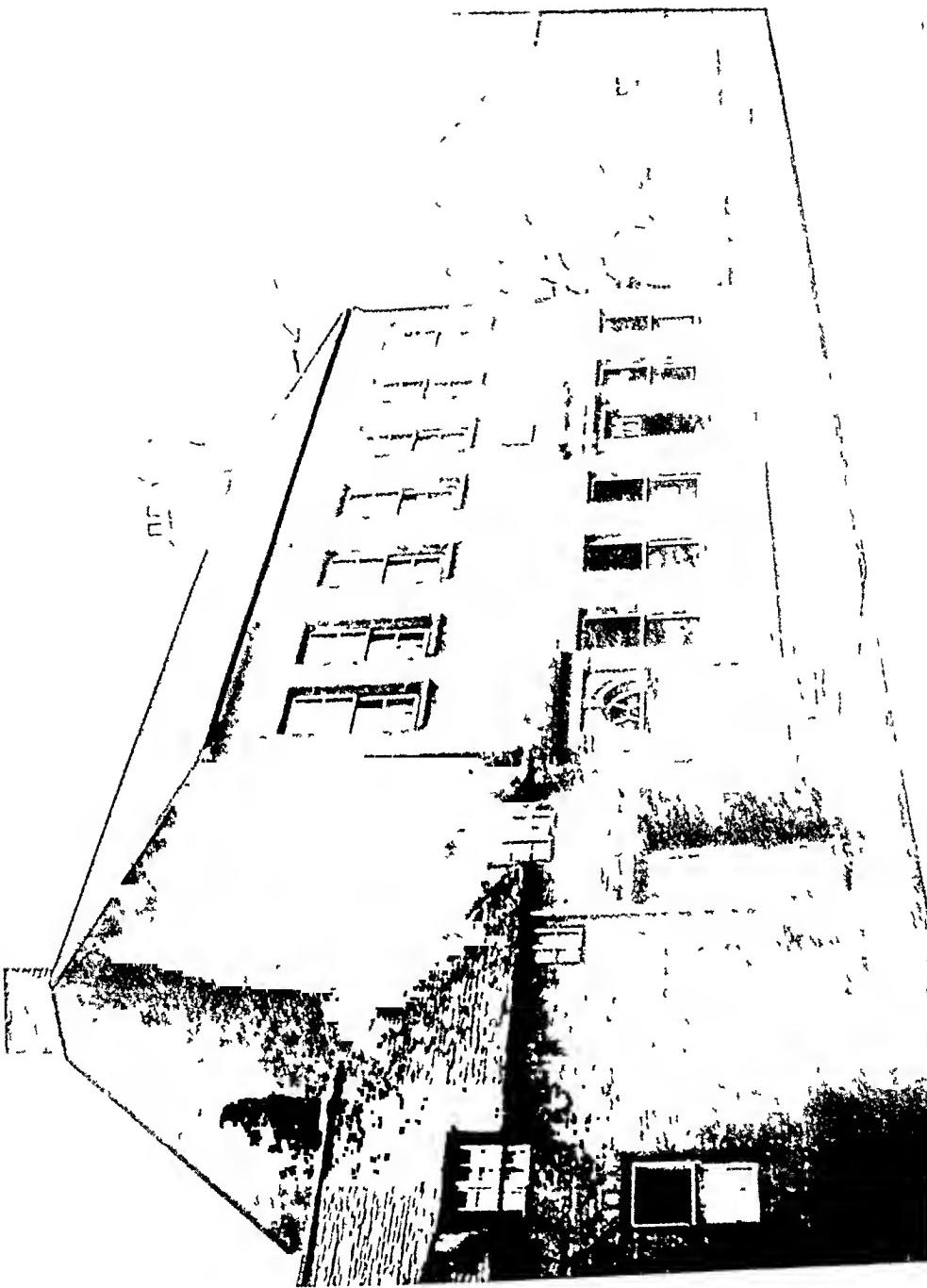
gave himself over entirely to a country life. He went out into the fields, noted the damage that the weather was doing to the harvest, and gladly returned to the comfort of his home and a good fire. He entertained when there was a race-meeting and was critical of the riding of five gentlemen who rode as amateur jockeys. Mr. Watson of North Seaton mounted on a good horse, he censured for quitting the ground without riding up to the post when he found he could not win, thus causing several bets to be lost to his friends. That was not the act of a gentleman.

But such occasions were nothing more than interludes. His marriage had brought a new influence into his life and one after his own heart. He was at pains to cultivate the friendship of his wife's uncle, the Rev. Alexander Carlyle, the Minister of Musselburgh. This was the man, "Jupiter" Carlyle, whom Sir Walter Scott spoke of as "the grandest demigod" he had ever seen. In his religion, we are told the minister was neither ascetic nor narrow, but perfectly willing to share "in a reasonable way" in the pleasures of tavern, club, or theatre company. Visits were exchanged between the Collingwoods and the Carlys and a correspondence began which lasted until the old man's death within a few weeks of Trafalgar.

Another of his friends was his neighbour, Matheson, who lived nearly opposite him on the other side of Oldgate. Mathesons had been living for a hundred years in a fine stone-built Stuart house, and now Collingwood found in the present member of the family a disciple eager to follow him in his cult of tree-planting. Upon Collingwood's suggestion Matheson planted and tended a thick wood on the high southern bank of the Wansbeck from the bridge that crossed the river at the end of Oldgate to the Castle postern on its high mound to the east. It was an ambitious venture, but it succeeded. The "sounding woods" through which the Wansbeck rushes at Morpeth to-day are the result.

*From a photograph by R Johnson*

Collingwood's House at Morpeth, 1936.





Nelson at this time, having married the widow, Fanny Nisbet, was living at his father's rectory at Burnham Thorpe. While Collingwood was settling himself "in great comfort" at Morpeth, entertaining, gossiping, attending the races, gardening, reading history and naval memoirs, reproving his two gardeners, Scott and William, for throwing away bad potatoes that might have been welcome at sea, Nelson was cultivating a few acres of glebe land beside the rectory, struggling to learn French, poring over charts and naval plans, shooting partridges instead of Frenchmen, and working off the remainder of his demonic energy by digging violently in the garden. Collingwood, too, had recourse to this last device. He dug trenches so long and deep that they completely hid him. A fever for fighting was gripping the two men and digging was the only outlet. "God knows when we will meet again," Collingwood wrote to Nelson, "unless some chance should draw us to the seashore."

Both sailors were politically minded. The riots which were a common occurrence of the time impinged strongly on the thoughts of the two, but the remedies they suggested for these were in strange contrast. Collingwood hoped that the mere flourishing of a big stick would restore order; Nelson urged that the distress which had led to the outbreaks should be relieved. Fundamental differences in the temperament of the two men are revealed in their letters.

Collingwood, writing to Nelson on November 14, 1792, declares: "There are great commotions in our neighbourhood.. The seamen at Shields have embarked themselves to the number of 1200 or 1400 with a view to compel the owners of the coal ships to advance their wages; and as is generally the case when they consider themselves the strongest party their demand has been exorbitant. Application has been made to Government for such assistance as the remedy of this evil might require. They have sent the *Drake* and *Martin* sloops

to join the *Racehorse* which was here before, whose presence I hope will dispose the Johnnies to peace, without having occasion to act. But the times are turbulent; and the enthusiasm for liberty is raging even to madness. The success of the French people in establishing their republic has set the same principle which lurked in every State in Europe afloat; and those who secreted it in their bosoms have now the boldness to avow a plan for adopting it in this country and to receive volunteers for carrying their purpose into execution. In this neighbourhood we seem to be pacific. Misery will undoubtedly be the consequence of any commotion or attempt to disturb our present most excellent Constitution."

He was a diehard Tory always. In 1776 he had written in disgust to his sister Betsy to tell her that the Mayor, Alderman, and Common Council of London had petitioned the King to call off the American War and arrange a settlement. "I am out of all patience with them," he declared, "and consider them the supporters of a dangerous rebellion rather than the assertors of the publick liberty."

But Nelson, in a letter to his friend, the Duke of Clarence, was constrained to point out that much misery did exist in spite of the most excellent Constitution. "That the poor labourers should have been seduced by promises and hopes of better times," he declared, "your Royal Highness will not wonder at when I assure you they are really in want of everything to make life comfortable. Part of their wants, perhaps, were unavoidable, from the dearness of every article of life, but much has arose from the neglect of the country gentleman in not making the farmers raise their wages in some small proportion as the prices of necessaries increased," and he adds to his letter a budget for an agricultural labourer's family showing they have "nothing to drink but water" and "not quite twopence a day" for food.

It is to be feared that Collingwood, the country gentleman, "settling down in great comfort," would have fallen out with his hero Nelson had not the French declared war on Great Britain and Holland in February, 1793, and plunged Europe once more into war.

## PART II

### I

#### HIDE AND SEEK

COLLINGWOOD left Northumberland with an eagerness which, in view of his later longings, was pathetic. He had not yet learned where his true happiness was to be found. He was now in his forty-sixth year and in his prime. Seventeen more years of life remained to him, but he was to spend only one of them at home. Of his fifty years in the service all but six were spent at sea. Up to the outbreak of the war with France all the circumstances of his life had encouraged the belief that for an active, healthy man to stay at home reading, gardening, and planting trees when there was a chance of fighting abroad was dishonourable beyond excuse and to this opinion he still clung. Soon he was to hold different views—at least so far as the matter affected him personally.

The hours he had spent while in Northumberland studying the trend of events in France and his protracted discussions with the Blacketts, the Roddams, and the Carlyles had convinced him that the purpose for which England was now engaged to fight was "a great and serious one." He saw himself as the apostle of civilisation wrestling with the powers of darkness. A mad people, under the mask of freedom, wished, he thought, to stamp their tyranny on every country in Europe. It was necessary, therefore, that their "machina-

tions" be resisted and what he was pleased to regard as "the happiest constitution that ever wisdom formed for preserving order in civil society" supported and defended. As he confessed to Sarah, he would "always be of Old England's party and of that alone." The execution of Louis XVI had horrified him. He applauded the expulsion of Chauvelin, the French Ambassador—the act with which England had expressed its opinion of the regicides—and when France retaliated by declaring war he was on fire to be at the throat of the nearest Frenchman. Henceforward his hatred of all things French, with the one exception of the language, was complete and adamant.

Collingwood had again to work hard to obtain a ship. He quickly rued the efforts of his friends. To his horror one of them wrote to Chatham recommending him for attention on the ground that he had a vote for a Parliament man. Collingwood was outraged. He had subjected himself to an obligation only to have his pride offended. If he had hustled less he might have got just as far, for Admiral Bowyer appointed him his flag captain on board the *Prince*. It was an appointment that gave him real pleasure, since it was one of great trust and responsibility and gave him a substantial claim in future to a line-of-battle ship in preference to a frigate. He had learned to reverse his earlier opinion regarding the advantages of frigates and men-of-war. Never again, he decided, would he serve in a two-decked ship when he could get a three-decker. On top of all this he was receiving in pay £300 a year more than in a frigate. He believed that no frigate would receive shares of prize-money equal to that. Altogether he was very happy.

He had the greatest difficulty in manning the *Prince* and getting her from Plymouth to Spithead. The shortage of men in spite of the press-gangs was so acute as to appear insurmountable. He was distressed by the slackness with which naval affairs seemed to be conducted after his four

years in the country. Gone was the old alacrity and promptness. There was everywhere a tardiness in the preparation and a sluggishness in the execution that were to him, with his memories of Captain Haswell, quite new. He was amazed to find that the ships which Lord Howe, the commander-in-chief, had hastily manned to protect the West Indian convoy, could not get down the Channel in fine midsummer weather without a mishap. Two men-of-war ran foul of each other and in the collision the *Bellerophon* lost her foremast and bowsprit and had to go, a cripple, to Plymouth. The weather could not be blamed for the misadventure, which in Collingwood's eyes was the result of making officers of young men who had neither skill nor attention. He was outraged to find scarcely a ship in the Navy that did not seem to him an instance of political interest being a better argument for promotion than any degree of skill. The languor which he perceived in all the operations of the fleet, both at home, Gibraltar, and the West Indies, deprived him, he claimed, of many a good hour's sleep. . . .

His gloomy forebodings were soon substantiated. In September when "worn to a skeleton" by the "unremitted business" of fitting out and manning the *Prince*, news arrived that the French fleet, in superior strength to the British, was off the Scillies. In a spirit of I-told-you-so, Collingwood promptly wrote to Mrs. Carlyle, asking: "Who would have thought that the British fleet would have ever been surpassed in strength by that of the Republic?" His heart was rent.

Somehow the scattered English ships were marshalled and got away only for the cruise to resolve itself into a series of vexations and disappointments in keeping with the wretchedness of the weather. Not until November 18 did the two fleets sight each other. The French ships at first mistook Howe's for a merchant convoy and bore down upon them, but discovering their mistake they were off at the best speed they could manage. Howe and his captains made such desperate

*By courtesy of Mr. P. Matheson*

Oldgate Street, Morpeth, as Collingwood knew it.  
From a print in the possession of Mr. R. Matheson.





efforts to catch up with them that three lost their topmasts under the weight of their sail and were disabled. Others sprang their spars. There was no doubting the better construction and sailing powers of the Frenchmen. The English vessels were outclassed. The *Russel*, *Audacious*, *Bellerophon*, *Defence*, and *Ganges* made a good show in the chase, but only the *Latona* frigate came anywhere near the enemy. These six ships then found themselves isolated from the rest of the fleet.

Collingwood fumed on board the *Prince*. He cursed his craft as the most miserable sailer in the fleet. The man who lamented the sluggishness of others, who was on fire to crush the French, had the humiliation of being for ever in the rear. The *Prince* was "a constant fret and torment" to him and defied all his efforts to send her ahead.

Then at night the French doubled in their tracks, eluded Howe in the dark, and next day while the English carried on southwards they were "flogging to the north." It was all very mortifying, particularly when in December they returned to Spithead and found that they were being censured as criminals. Lord Howe, the first ambition of whose life was "to do good service to his country," had to bear the brunt of the contumely that was showered on the fleet, though, as Collingwood pointed out to his father-in-law, the poor man had "no supernatural powers on a winter's day to make the sun stand still or make an English ship sail fast or a French ship ill."

A modicum of good emerged from this evil experience. The *Prince* was too thoroughly bad a ship to serve for a rear-admiral, and Bowyer and Collingwood accordingly transferred to the *Barfleur*. This was one of the most famous ships in the Navy. It is a revealing comment on the times to know that the *Barfleur*, which was built at Chatham in 1763, had served as Hood's flagship during his action with Du Grasse and was to serve as Bowyer's at Ushant (the "Glorious First

of June") and Waldegrave's at Cape St. Vincent, had a tonnage of 1947 and a length of 177 feet. The tonnage of H.M.S. *Nelson* is 35,000 and her length 660 feet.

It cost Collingwood considerable time and trouble to dismantle the dull *Prince* and equip the *Barfleur*. It was trouble which he hoped would be rewarded. Bowyer had command of eight sail of the line ready to sail on the shortest notice, but they had no hint of what their service was to be. "The trade," Collingwood pointed out, "has hitherto been left to the care of Providence and our plans are so often varied that it is not improbable that we may stay here for the summer to gild our achievements. . . . The execution is certainly mysterious. Great fleets are prepared and lay totally inactive. Schemes of conquest are formed and relinquished at the moment when execution is expected. By all accounts we are to expect an attack, and I expect it will terminate as happily as can be wished in so total a discomfiture of the enemy that they will sue for peace."

This was in March, 1794, when another scandal, the ignominy of the English at Toulon, was tearing his soul. The South of France was ambitious to form itself into a republic of its own under the protection of England. Lord Hood, commanding the Mediterranean fleet, negotiated with the citizens of Toulon for temporary possession of the port and city. He took possession, but Napoleon stormed him out. Collingwood was wild.

"Our miscarriage at Toulon is truly provoking, the more so as gross mismanagement alone could have prevented its being totally destroyed," he heatedly declared. "Lord Hood was in good luck to get possession of it, but was not general enough to discover how critical his situation was there. No preparation was made for the destruction either of ships or arsenal; and at last perhaps it was put into as bad hands as could be found—Sir Sydney Smith, who arrived there a few days before and had no public situation either in the fleet or

army, but was wandering to gratify his curiosity—you know how it was executed. The ships should have been prepared for sinking as soon as he got possession of them, loading them deep with ballast and stones, and making a porthole in them near the edge of the water; and then placing the ships in those parts of the harbour which would most effectually injure it. If the necessity for sinking the ships did not arise they would be uninjured; if it did they might have all been put under water in half an hour."

It was all so clear and simple to a patriotic English officer held up at Spithead that his irritation is understandable. But when he is himself in command after Trafalgar will he practise what he now preaches? We shall see.

But such doubts are unthinkable in an English naval officer. Secure in his own omniscience Collingwood surveyed the world and declared that in all our operations there was nothing pleasurable to be found. He gloated over each piece of service tittle-tattle. The squadron in the Mediterranean was very much in the dumps. Good. Lord Hood's ambition being far in excess of his abilities, many unpleasant circumstances arose. Excellent. These are the symptoms of frustration. They are not pleasant traits, but most of us betray them.

Finally, one of the schemes of conquest that had been formed and relinquished so often during the winter was approved and the fleet, consisting of 148 sail, of which 34 were of the line, sailed in search of the French on May 2, 1794. The sight, Clark Russell thinks, was "probably one of the finest spectacles ever witnessed." It had the rare distinction of fulfilling the promise of its start. Within a month, off Ushant, it was to fight the action that is known in English Naval history as "The Glorious First of June."

The first duty of the fleet was to see the convoys down the Channel as far as the Lizard. There Rear-Admiral Montague, with six sail of the line for their further protection, was

detached and the fleet stretched across the Channel to Brest where the French armada lay.

Two English frigates, covered by two ships of the line, were sent into the harbour to ascertain the enemy's strength. The French were seen to be at anchor and the sails of twenty-four large ships were counted.

The wind now veered to the north-east and the English were blown southwards for the next fortnight. The Frenchmen got under way on May 16. Next day, in a fog so dense that the forecastle of a ship could not be seen from the poop, the two flotillas passed each other. In the swirling mist they could hear each other's bells and drums, sounded as fog signals, and yet they could not come to blows. The general blindness lasted for twenty-four hours. When the fog lifted there was no enemy to be seen. The French had completely flown when Howe's spies again looked in at Brest.

## "THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE"

**H**OYE now cruised to the west with some small but encouraging success. Fifteen English merchant vessels, some Dutch, and a few French cruisers were retaken and immediately burned, as it was impossible to spare any ships to shepherd the captured vessels into port or even to be encumbered with prizes.

The exhilaration of these proceedings was wearing off when between eight and nine o'clock on the morning of little Sarah's birthday—May 28—the French fleet, consisting of twenty-five sail of the line and five frigates, was sighted to windward. There were twenty-eight ships in the English fleet, but the French, it was estimated, had about three hundred more guns.

The signal was made to chase. The gap between the two fleets was shortened to twenty-five miles. By three o'clock the first shots were exchanged, but it was not until evening that anything like an action took place. Then the English van engaged the French rear. There was some hot work until 9 p.m. when hostilities were suspended for the night.

It was a sleepless time for all. Everyone waited, alert, for the dawn. When the light strengthened the French were seen still nearly four miles to windward. They refused to close but raked Howe's force from a distance. This did not suit the English book. At 6 a.m. the signal was made to tack with the object of forcing a fight between the English van and the French rear, but the French cleverly wore and at eight o'clock the two fleets were still strung out in parallel

lines. They remained like this for two more hours while the French smartly cannonaded the English. Howe found that there was no chance of a close action except by a dash. He signalled the van to tack and the others to follow in succession and thus pass through the French line. They failed in this, but Admiral Gardner, who led the van, severely cut up the French rear.

Collingwood, in the *Barfleur*, had all this time been lagging at the back, but Howe's manœuvre brought up his ship close to a Frenchman. Shot was pumped into the enemy vessel with shattering force. He could not understand how his target still contrived to swim.

The French skilfully covered their stricken rear and in their turn assaulted that of the English. Collingwood worked the *Barfleur* and Admiral Graves the *Royal Sovereign* between two mauled British ships and the attacking French. They had a lively ninety minutes exchanging shots with a French first-rate and two 74-gun ships.

The English vessels *Queen* and *Invincible* had suffered in the French counter-attack, but the *Barfleur* and the *Royal Sovereign* turned the enemy to leeward of the crippled *Queen* and thereafter she did not receive a shot. At the end of a hour and a half the French drew off to lick their wounds. They had at least three ships "quite like wrecks." It was now evening and nothing decisive could be done. The English line had become disordered. There was another restless, sleepless night. Howe and his officers wrapped themselves in great-coats and flung their weary bodies into arm-chairs in their cabins.

Two days of thick fog followed. It was scarcely possible to see the length of a ship. The tension under which all were suffering became intolerable. Blind men tossed impotently on a sea as restless as themselves. The French had an excellent chance to cut and run, but they did not take it. Collingwood was astonished. He could account for it only

by assuming that the fear of the guillotine hung over their heads. Then on the afternoon of May 31 the fog cleared. Three miles of ocean were seen to separate the enemies. The English fleet was to windward. The time and manner of engaging were theirs to decide.

They spent the rest of the afternoon forming the order for battle and in preparing for action. Haggard men kept watch all night: The officers did not sleep. Fire burned in the blood of the Frenchmen. They knew their strength to be superior, their gunpowder greater, and their ships better built than their enemy's. Liberty, equality, and fraternity would triumph at sea, and English tyranny be crushed, they thought. They were impatient to be up and doing.

The British were more sober. The unexpected excellence of the French armada had had a chastening effect. Come what might they were resolved faithfully to do their duty, but Collingwood, for one, took the precaution of sending forth many a blessing to his Sarah lest he should never bless her more. . . .

Yet when it came to the touch next day his confidence welled up within him. He was never so happy and assured as on these occasions. He had the gift of viewing the battle with artistic detachment and see it all as a gallant, rousing spectacle. His mind noted all the details with relish. He savoured the excitement and enjoyed it all.

At the flush of dawn the enemy were approached. Then the line was drawn up and the ranks dressed. Soon after nine o'clock Howe signalled for each ship to engage her opponent and bring her to close action. There was a grand movement as on the instant all the ships in the line altered their course. Then down they went, under a crowd of sail, “in a manner,” Collingwood noted, “that would have animated the coldest heart and struck terror into the most intrepid enemy. ’Twas a noble sight! Nothing could exceed the grandeur of the scene.”

It was now ten o'clock on a Sunday morning. Collingwood, in the exhilaration of the moment, observed to Bowyer that, notwithstanding the superior strength of the French, the English had at least one advantage over them. "Our wives, sir," he said, "will be praying for our success, but the French have not wives like ours, nor prayers to offer. They will now, God bless them, be on their way to church, but I think the peal we shall ring about the Frenchmen's ears will outdo the parish bells." Collingwood was himself again.

The ship which the *Barfleur* was to engage was two ahead of that of the French Admiral. They were rocked by three successive broadsides before they fired a gun in return. It was a point of honour with Collingwood not to fire before Howe—and the commander was not in the habit of firing early. The lesson he had learned at Bunker Hill had not been forgotten. The *Barfleur* was close upon its victim before Collingwood let fly, and then the fire was such "as would have done you good to have heard," he told his father-in-law. The whole fleet indeed began firing from one end of the line to the other almost at the same time—"a more furious onset was never or one more obstinately resisted."

The obstinate resistance took its toll of those on the *Barfleur*. Within ten minutes Bowyer was shot in the leg. Collingwood caught him in his arms as he fell. The first lieutenant was wounded in the head by the same shot. The flag-captain thought he was in a fair way of being left alone on deck. He himself regarded a shower of shot much as other men regard a flurry of snowflakes. Presently the first lieutenant returned from the midshipmen's berth, now in the possession of the surgeons, with a bandage round his brow and carried on. He had much to do.

Four of the enemy vessels had furnaces for heating their shot before firing it. They kept pounding away, and the English cockle-shells rocked as the red-hot shot smashed into their sides and the rigging crashed about the heads of those



*By courtesy of Mr. E. F. Collingwood*  
Collingwood, about 1783.



on deck. It was, Collingwood thought, the severest action of his time or, perhaps, ever. Throughout June 1 it was touch and go which side would triumph.

There came a cry from the foc'sle of the *Barfleur* that their French opponent was sinking. For three-quarters of an hour the two ships had been locked together in a stifling smoke-cloud, and jarred, torn, and mangled by the force of each other's fire. As soon as the cry was heard all the British Johnnies started up from their guns and raised three cheers. The smoke parted for an instant and through the rent Collingwood saw that the Frenchman was a wreck. It was dismasted and on its broadside. Then the black wraith closed and he missed seeing the shattered vessel sink.

He now saw that his companion vessel, the *Invincible*, was severely damaged, but opposing him in the enemy's line was a Frenchman “much crippled in her masts and rigging.” With a characteristic gesture he signalled the *Invincible* to change places in the line “that she might take the crippled ship and we might have a fresh one.” During the rest of the engagement the *Invincible* stuck so close to the *Barfleur* that they might have been lashed together. Sometimes she had her jib-boom over Collingwood's taffrail.

Soon after noon the French line broke, leaving “the seas covered with wreck and seven noble ships to be captured by us.” Nine of the French men-of-war “had not a stick left as long as my finger. Three others had lost two masts each; their frigates got hold of them and towed them off.”

Collingwood, like a good Englishman, never knew when he was hurt. He claimed that “we left off in admirable good plight.” They had, “with God's blessing, obtained as complete a victory as ever was won at sea.” The day's proceedings had worked “like magic.” All the same, the English were incapable of pursuing the stricken French. Seven prizes had been bagged including the *Sans Pareil* and the *Juste*, eighty-fours, the *L'Amerique*, an eighty, and the *Achille*,

*Northumberland*, and *Le Vengeur*, seventy-fours. The *Le Vengeur* sank that evening. To take possession of the prizes "required exertion; two of our ships were totally dismasted and many of us very much crippled." However, the damage was less than could be expected "considering the fire we had had so long on us."

Yet, he had "much to lament." Nine of his men had been killed and twenty-two severely wounded. His masts were damaged but in place. Bowyer's injury "quite checked joy" in him. The day's work, however, had so raised the wounded admiral's spirits that Collingwood became afraid that he would make himself worse, and at last "shut him up and prohibited everybody but the surgeon and necessary attendants going near him."

On top of all this his mind was overcast by the superiority in ships and guns the French had shown. It astonished him that, though ruined in their finances, supplied with great difficulty with stores, and with almost all Europe at war with them, the French could meet the English at sea with a bigger and better fleet. It was not right that England should allow her navy to be opposed by a force that luck, chance, the mere play of the cards, might make victorious. . . .

But in spite of everything it was a time of triumph. He could sweeten his sourness with the shadow of a smile. There had been an English victory over odds, and he, deputising for Bowyer, had done all that could possibly be expected of him. Surely the day would be happy in its consequences for himself and for England? Peace and honours must—so he dreamed—inevitably come his way. Sarah and his infant children would have cause to be proud of him.

## THE MEDAL

**I**T was not to be. Howe, after writing his first despatch to the Admiralty recounting the day's proceedings, invited his flag-captains to recommend officers for decorations. Bowyer, shut up in his cabin by Collingwood, with one leg amputated, and forbidden to see anybody but the surgeon and necessary attendants, could do nothing to help Collingwood receive the medal on which his heart was set. When later in the month Howe's Supplementary despatch appeared Collingwood's name was conspicuously absent. Others, too, were missing. Schomberg, of the *Culloden*; Bazeley, of the *Alfred*; Elphinstone, of the *Glory*—Howe had overlooked them all.

“These selections, however, should not be construed to the disadvantage of other commanders who may have been equally deserving of the approbation of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, although I am not enabled to make a particular statement of their merits,” Howe wrote. And salt was rubbed into Collingwood’s wound when he learned that Bowyer, Bowyer who had fallen within ten minutes of the commencement of the battle, Bowyer whose place he had taken and thereafter fought the *Barfleur* single-handed and alone, was instead of him to have a medal. He felt his heart would break. He was sick with mortification. Never in his life, no, not even when Haswell had court martialled him, had he known such exquisite mental pain. He felt that it was an injustice that there should be even the shadow of a

suspicion that every possible exertion had not been made by the *Barfleur* and that such an insinuation should go out into the world He was so much out of temper that he ceased his letter-writing until his sky had opened out a little He forgot he had ever thought that "discontent would mean sorrow for his friends, triumph for his enemies, and good for no one "

Lord Howe's Supplementary Despatch threw the fleet into the utmost consternation and astonishment Pakenham of the *Invincible* declared to many "If Collingwood has not deserved a medal neither do I, for we were together the whole day "

The thwarted flag-captain rushed to Lord Howe, but he got no further than his secretary, Sir Roger Curtis Collingwood had reason to believe that Sir Roger was the author of the hateful despatch It was a frigid interview

"I consider, Sir Roger," he said, "that the conduct of the *Barfleur* merited commendation when commendation was given to zeal and activity This insinuation that either was wanting is injurious and unjust No ship was more warmly or effectively engaged than the *Barfleur* from the beginning to the end of the action" And he added sarcastically "It was not our fault that the Frenchmen did not knock our masts away"

Sir Roger was dignity itself "I assure you," he replied, "that no disapprobation was meant to be implied In the selections the Admiral was pleased to make, he had to stop somewhere The good conduct of the fleet is summed up in a sentence"

Collingwood's mouth set in a thin, hard line "It is a most unfortunate style," he retorted Mr Moises' pupil had scored, but it was an empty victory

A state visit from the King brought matters to a head All the captains of the fleet attended in their barges to escort the royal family in great parade to Lord Howe's ship, but they

were not allowed to set foot on deck. They heard of the passing of great ceremonies of congratulation and the presentation to Lord Howe of a silver sword. Everybody's mind was soured. The captains felt their exclusion bitterly. While the nation was rejoicing in a great victory those who had won it were alone dejected and sad.

When the officers assembled on shore next morning prior to a levee Lord Hugh Seymour, one of the officers mentioned in Howe's Supplementary Despatch as having particular claim to his attention, informed the Admiral how dissatisfied they were with their treatment. His method of attack was one after Collingwood's own heart.

"We hoped," he said, "that when His Majesty did us the honour to hoist his flag in the fleet we should not be excluded by order from his presence. Nothing could have been more gratifying to us than to witness the honours conferred on you which you have so justly merited. The world understands that the King has come to do honour to his fleet. Officers of inferior rank in other corps have been received into his ship, but we are positively excluded. I know of no honour the officers of the navy have received by the King's presence, unless sitting in a boat for four hours is one."

Howe was badly cut up by Seymour's outburst. He offered to surrender his command if he could not give general satisfaction. Next day, when the King sailed in a frigate, Collingwood heard with sour satisfaction that the vessel had been run on shore near the Isle of Wight. The royal visitors were obliged to return in the ship's boats. It was a sign of the times.

The King made amends by inviting his officers to dinner. Collingwood, to his surprise, had a very pleasant day. He found the King cheerful and good-humoured towards everyone. He was struck by the fact that there was as little ceremony as at the table of a private gentleman.

For three months Collingwood plumbed the depths of

despair. Had he not trusted that truth and facts "would stand their ground against any injurious insinuations" he felt he would have "shrunk with grief." He went so far as to take his grievance to the elder Pitt in London, and in consequence was promised the command of any seventy-four that was vacant. The *Hector* and the *Edgar* were both ready, and he chose the *Hector*, Admiral Montague's ship. He calculated that it would take Montague anything from ten days to a fortnight to remove from her and flew post-haste to Sarah in Northumberland.

He reached Morpeth on a Friday night. His "blessed wife" was waiting for him on the road. For eight-and-forty hours his cares and vexations were forgotten. His two little daughters quite delighted him. Sarah the elder seemed to have "all the sweet gentleness of her mother. Mildness and sensibility" marked all her childish actions. He was certain she would comfort him if he lived to be an old man. Mary Pat had more fire, a quicker temper. He prophesied she would be "a spirited dame," but he believed that with proper training, and the example she would ever have before her, she would prove "an inexhaustible source of joy." He hoped that little Sall would be good-looking rather than handsome and possessed of good, plain understanding. They were "as fine healthy children as ever the sun shone on." They inherited, indeed, his granite constitution. When the weather was uncommonly severe and trying to all constitutions his "bonny brats" bore it better than anybody. Their good health did "great credit to their mother's management and care."

It was a happy interlude, but a brief one. On the Sunday evening a letter arrived from the Admiralty. He was ordered at once to Portsmouth where his commission awaited him. It was disappointing, but he raced to Portsmouth, not wishing to be accused of wasting so much as an hour.

He found that he had no men, but as all the ships that could

be mustered would be wanted, he hoped it would not be long before he got out. At the first opportunity he went to Lord Howe at Spithead and was received very graciously. The interview is described in a letter to Sir Edward Blackett : Howe " lamented that the Admiralty had put new officers into the fleet who were unacquainted with his signals and general discipline and hoped my ship would soon be in a condition to join him. I have told him how much I have been hurt and disappointed after all the exertion I was capable of by not having obtained that testimony of his approbation which he had given to others and which I had hoped for ; but doubted not on some future day it would not be denied. He talked of the disadvantages the fleet laboured under by the windward situation of the enemy and what we should have done had we had the wind of them at first meeting—steering clear of any explanation which related particularly to me. I believe he heartily wished his letter had never been wrote."

Yet his grudge against Howe did not relax. In August, 1794, still two and a half years before the mutiny at the Nore, he noticed the signs of restlessness which pervaded the fleet and laid the fault at Howe's door. He believed that if Howe was supplanted by Barrington the move would be acceptable. The seamen were sour and " any little matter would make a convulsion."

" I have heard," he wrote to Carlyle, " the *Barfleur*'s men have shown signs of dangerous restlessness when part of them was to be drafted into another ship. On Admiral Elphinstone's coming they refused to go, they would not be separated ; but the temperate and good management of Elphinstone settled the business quietly. Now I do not believe that this proceeded from much personal attachment to each other, nor from dislike of the ship they were going into, but rather evinced a disposition to cavil, of which I fear the seeds are sown. Let them take care the growth is checked dexterously or we will need no foreign enemy to confound us."

Howe, he felt, was substituting parade and ceremony for action. Numerous French squadrons threatened to destroy the English trade while Howe made his arrangements. Nothing was heard of his quitting the command. Yet the French had three or four active squadrons out and were doing infinite mischief. A Dutch ship was retaken and the Navy learned that three enemy frigates had taken about twenty-four prizes, eighteen of which were English, within three weeks. By the time the fleet got down the Channel, he thought, the French would have pretty well done their business and returned to port.

News reached him on September 1 that a squadron of nine sail of the line had taken a great number of ships off the coast of Ireland. Yet still Howe lay with the fleet at St. Helens. Any dull merchantman could get down the Channel, but a fleet of first-class sailing-ships could not go because the wind would not let them sail in certain forms. Only Howe could get away with such a phantasy. In others it would be reckoned nonsense. . . .

Still, it was with Howe that he wished to serve. He yearned for the sweet revenge of exacting from him the medal he had withheld. Even the promise of £1400—a thousand pounds of which being paid immediately would enable him “to make some purchases”—for the French prizes did not halt him in the pursuit of his ambition. A medal, a bright, gold, gleaming medal, he had earned off Ushant and a medal he would have. He would not be happy till he had it.

We are separated from this attitude of mind by a different tradition. His ambition savours to us of pot-hunting and the old school tie. Where we are now encouraged by the social canons of etiquette and “good form” to be reticent and prefer a hero who cloaks himself in anonymity, it was customary in Collingwood’s time to be emphatic and assertive. Social usage not only allowed it but expected it. Nelson, we are told, “wore his orders on all sorts of occasions—at dinner in

his cabin, for instance—so that it would almost seem that he scarcely took them off.” Collingwood, acutely conscious of his own zeal, looked at the shining discs on the tunics of his peers and writhed under the lash of a humiliation worse than the scourging of whips.

## BLOCKADE (I)

THE task of manning the *Hector* went slowly ahead. The difficulty was such that Collingwood did not know when he would be ready for sea. In two months he got together only 130 men. But he liked his ship and in all other respects was ready for sea at very short notice.

He informed Carlyle from Portsmouth that bowel complaints were very common in the port. When they were the fashion he never failed to have his share. It is the first mention he makes of the trouble which was to cut off his life prematurely.

The *Hector* was no sooner in order than Collingwood was transferred to the *Excellent*, then an eight years old seventy-four of 1614 tons burthen. His patriotism did not blind him to the shortcomings of English naval architecture. Englishmen find it easy to believe that any hulk knocked together in a British shipyard is immeasurably superior to anything that foreign shipwrights can produce. Collingwood never suffered from this delusion. It was his constant prayer that in all actions the weather should be fine. Then the French would gain little advantage from the superior construction of their ships, "which in rough weather," he told Carlyle, "becomes a subject for consideration, for our builders never will be equal to them. The French fight their ower deck when ours cannot be opened for the sea." Not every naval commander is so candid.

The French War had caused prices to rocket. Throughout

the summer of 1795 he was distressed by the cost in which ship's housekeeping involved him. "Everything is so extravagantly dear that it is wonderful how the poor live," he told Carlyle. "We give 45 and 50 shillings for sheep which before the war were sold for 30. Hay, £7 10s. a ton. A bad fowl for half a crown. I assure you it puts both William and myself to our management. And I don't think there is likely soon to be an end of it."

In the middle of July, he sailed with a numerous convoy to Spain and Portugal to rejoin the fleet in the Mediterranean. His conscientiousness was such that on the way, while the Indian merchantmen were in his care, he seldom slept more than two hours at a time. He took such care of his charge that not one of them was missing when they parted company, nor had any suffered damage of any kind. All the masters came on board the *Excellent* at the parting to thank Collingwood for his attention to their safety.

He was glad to be back in the Mediterranean, where he had served as a midshipman. While he was at sea he could not be, he thought, in a better country. He did not know how long he was to be there. But it pleased him to think that he was likely "to have more business there" than on the other side of Europe. The south of France depended on imported corn which they obtained from Africa. A blockade would force the French fleet to sea to protect that trade.

Nelson was already in the Mediterranean. He wrote to Collingwood to welcome him. "You are so old a Mediterranean man," he said, "that I can tell you nothing new about the country. My command here is so far pleasant as it relieves me from the inactivity of our fleet, which is very great indeed, as you will soon see."

Having cruised for a time off Leghorn, vainly expecting a clash with eighteen Spanish men-of-war mustered near Cape St. Sebastian, Collingwood was sent to take part in the

protracted blockade of Toulon. Spying out the strength of the enemy, he counted seventeen sail of the line, most of them apparently ready for sea, but was informed that they were internally very unfit and wanted both men and provisions.

At the end of February, on a very dark and rainy night, he was involved in a collision. The *Princess Royal*, in a squall, ran on board the *Excellent*. Collingwood was on deck at the time and saw her coming. He was just able to sheer off a little and prevent the *Excellent* from being cut right down to the water's edge. As it was, the *Princess Royal* carried away bowsprit and foremast and left the *Excellent* a complete wreck. The sea was high enough to thump in the ship's sides. The crew had only just cleared the wreckage of masts and rigging when a hard gale of wind blew the vessel into the Gulf of Lyons on a lee shore.

The fleet crowded round the damaged craft to give it what shelter a huddle of ships could provide, but it was not safe for them to do this long and they had to draw off, leaving a frigate to attend Collingwood. They made many attempts to get the *Excellent* hard round before they achieved their purpose. Next day jury masts were run up and Collingwood sailed for Ajaccio in Corsica. Again they were caught by a gale and threatened with the loss of all the remaining masts. It took three days to reach harbour.

Even in port his cares and anxieties did not cease, for he was naturally a worrying man. It was a "very painful" time for him. At one stretch he spent forty-eight hours on deck and scarcely sat down to eat. He was "not much the fatter for it nor a bit the worse, thanks to a good, hard constitution," he said when it was over.

He regarded the Corsicans as barbarians. He found that the least offence offered to one of them was followed by a stab or a shot from behind a wall. Even in the public square they stabbed each other and no one attempted to stop the assassin as he walked away wiping his dagger. Some bad



*By courtesy of the Art Gallery Committee, Newcastle City Council*

Engraved Portrait of Collingwood in the Laing Art Gallery and Museum,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

After J. Lonsdale.



Corsican carpenters, discharged from the shipyard, took a shot at the commissioner as he walked in his garden. Practice, however, had not made their aim perfect and Mr. Coffin—surely an ill-omened name in such a place?—escaped.

At last he got away and returned to his task of watching the French fleet in Toulon. He found it dull work. The food was wearisome. The sole source of supply was Corsica and that afforded nothing but hogs, the subject of profiteering. He wished he could have had some of the bad potatoes which his gardeners at home threw casually over the wall of his garden, for the lack of vegetables was felt more than anything.

French merchant vessels, if they hugged the shore, could enter Toulon unmolested, for the English feared the batteries on shore. It was not a service on which Collingwood felt he would grow fat and there was no prospect of its changing. Indeed the plot seemed to thicken. He fancied that the most serious part of the war was but beginning. The French had had “quite miraculous” successes against the Austrians and had possession of all the towns in the neighbourhood of Genoa. Their way into the southern states of Italy was clear. The Sardinians were worn out and suing for peace.

The allies dropped off one by one. The Neapolitans seemed about to follow the same plan, for their three ships which had been attached to the Mediterranean fleet had left for some time and he had little expectation of their ever returning. If the French marched in the south of Italy, what could the Neapolitans do but make peace before they came? And the Spaniards, ostensibly at peace, were making great preparations for war. It looked as though England would have to carry on the war single-handed. He did not know how this could be done. All their supplies would be precarious.

Hitherto the fleet had had free access to all the Italian ports and what they had obtained from these had helped very much

to keep the men healthy and the ships in good repair. It would be another matter if they were cut off from the flesh kettles of Leghorn. The news from home was equally distressing. He was told of "tumultuous associations and clubs in England" and was afflicted by "the licence they had taken in their acts and publications." Some people, he diagnosed, attached themselves to violent parties through unhappy dispositions and delighted in whatever was turbulent. Some did so from fashion. But very many from folly, being entirely incapable of judging of the propriety of the measures which they censured. It was all very regrettable.

The French suspended naval operations in the Mediterranean throughout the summer. The blockade was kept so close to the port that the moment the enemy were to pass from under the protection of their forts, the English fleet would be ready for them. Jervis was so impatient to get at the French that had they ventured from their anchorages, the protection of their shore forts would not have availed them. The two forces were of equal strength whenever the English detachments were away, but Collingwood fancied that the French found it easier to discipline men for the army than for the various duties of the navy. Even after twenty-eight weeks at sea, during which shirts had turned brown and dinners had been scanty, the British seamen were remarkably healthy, thanks to the "wonderful pains" taken by the Admiral.

Only a proportion of those in the blockading fleet were Englishmen, for Drake's descendants were so reluctant to put to sea in the floating hells provided for them by the graft-ridden Admiralty that men of all nationalities, taken prisoners from French ships, had to be pressed into service. In the *Excellent*, Collingwood had serving under him Austrians, Poles, Croats, and Hungarians.

So the blockade dragged on. Collingwood's prophecies were justified by events. The French closed Leghorn and

Genoa against the British. Miserable Corsica now produced nothing but rebels and officers. Viceroys, Secretaries of State, and governors they had in plenty, and the military establishment was "excessive to a farce." The sky looked very black.

## CAPE ST. VINCENT

**D**IPLOMATISTS rough-hewed the trend of destiny during September, 1796. A treaty, signed by France and Spain, was ratified in Paris on the 12th of the month, and three days later Great Britain retaliated by placing an embargo on all Spanish ships at anchor in English ports. The Dons were naturally easygoing, but this move had its inevitable consequence. A fortnight later Spain declared war on Great Britain.

The first tangible effect of these moves was the evacuation of Corsica by the British. No longer could the fleet find shelter within the harbour at Ajaccio and even the supply of wild hogs, dear though they were, was cut off. The sole Mediterranean port open to Jervis's ships was Porto Ferraio, at Elba. It was, strategically, the worst possible harbour in which to be caught. Collingwood was sure that if the enemy once blocked them up there, nothing could prevent their total destruction. The situation was critical.

France and Spain, combined, had an immensely stronger naval force than England. Admiral Mann, expected to arrive with reinforcements, failed to appear. An acutely anxious Jervis waited for him at St. Fiorenzo Bay, Corsica, for fourteen days after the island had been officially evacuated. Collingwood was one of those who climbed to the tops of the mountains overlooking the bay and wore out his eyes searching the horizon in vain for Mann.

The Spaniards, twice as strong as Jervis, cruised just beyond the range of sight. Frigates, sent out to reconnoitre, learned

that the French were expected to join the Dons at any hour. The land batteries began to annoy the waiting British. So uncomfortable did the bombardment become that Jervis was forced to sail on November 2. A succession of gales sickened and dispersed the Spaniards and the outnumbered Englishmen escaped without interference. They had a long passage down to Gibraltar and though it was December before they reached the naval base, yet no Spaniards came up to molest them while they were at sea.

The winter was a hard one. Strong and almost incessant winds weakened the English ships and reduced their fighting strength to that of a cruising squadron. The *Courageux* was lost with almost all on board. The *Bombay Castle* also foundered, and while the *Gibraltar* and the *Zealous* had miraculous escapes, their bottoms were so torn that one had to be sent to England and the other go into dock at Lisbon for repairs.

Allies had been found in the Portuguese, but when Jervis left Rosia Bay for Lisbon, it was found that their enthusiasm was tepid, to say the least. They took the war so casually that in Collingwood's eyes they had an air of saying : " Well, if you will protect us, you may." Portugal had a number of fine ships, but rather than defend them she would have cheerfully handed them over to the French, so Collingwood believed, if the enemy had sailed up the Tagus and demanded them. Life at that moment to the captain of the *Excellent* was anything but bright.

For three months he had not had word from home. Now that he was at Lisbon and a little nearer home he hoped that at last letters from his family would reach him. But no. Within forty-eight hours of uttering his wish, the task fell to Jervis, with only eleven line-of-battle ships, of convoying a fleet of Brazilian and Portuguese merchantmen in safety to the trade routes. They put to sea with the knowledge that the Spaniards, with twenty-six sail of the line and a number of

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frigates, lay in wait for them at Carthagena, while Villeneuve, the French commander-in-chief, was making with his squadron for Brest.

Jervis was promised the assistance of Rear-Admiral W. Parker with five men-of-war and one frigate. Cape St. Vincent, in the extreme south-west of Portugal, was appointed as the rendezvous, but before Parker reached it, one of his best vessels, the 98-gun first-rate *St. George*, had met with disaster.

Collingwood sailed with Jervis from Lisbon on January 18, 1797. When the junction with Parker was made in February, the total strength of the English fleet amounted to fifteen line-of-battle ships. As they cruised off Cape St. Vincent, they learned that the Spanish fleet, comprising twenty-eight men-of-war, were coming down the Mediterranean. Jervis waited. A day or two later frigates brought news that the Spaniards had posted one man-of-war and a dozen frigates off Gibraltar and were in full cry after the English fleet with nearly forty sail. Jervis had fifteen first-rates and four frigates. It was enough. He would attack.

The English became aware of the presence of the enemy during the evening of February 13. There was a thick haze and the Spaniards fired off their guns as fog signals. Jervis, Nelson, and Collingwood felt the blood rush through their veins. The situation, they thought, dangerous and uncertain as it was, could scarcely be bettered. They had no relish for a walkover.

Next morning, St. Valentine's Day, there was some fog until the sun strengthened. By 6.30 the haze had so thinned that five opposing sail could be seen. Three hours later the look-out at the masthead of Jervis's ship, the *Victory*, counted thirty-one Spanish ships.

The enemy's fleet was huddled together so that their masts were like a forest. As for the English, they were a compact little body and "formed one of the most beautiful and close

lines ever beheld." All the efforts of Cordova, the Spanish admiral, to get his ships in order only made confusion worse confounded. The English had no fears for the outcome of the day.

Jervis saw his way clear. He would cut the enemy in two and leave those to leeward helpless on this still morning. In this way he would reduce to more manageable proportions the number of his victims. It was a shrewd move and the germ out of which grew Nelson's battle plan at Trafalgar. Without such a pruning movement, the English fleet would have been fatally outclassed by sheer weight of guns. It was calculated that only twenty-eight more cannon would have given the Spaniards exactly twice as many guns as their opponents. Cordova's flagship, the four-decker *Santissima Trinidad*, carrying 130 guns, was the largest ship afloat. Several others had 112 guns, two had 80, and the remainder had not less than 70 cannon each. The English fleet had only two ships ranking as first-rates. Four of their vessels carried 90 guns, and one, the *Diadem*, was a little sixty-four.

Jervis's band of brothers flew at their opponents "as a hawk to his prey," so Collingwood told Sarah, or, in the phrase he used when writing to Carlyle, "like griffens spouting fire." They had no difficulty in cutting through the Spanish line and, obeying Jervis's signal, promptly tacked upon the larger division. Nine enemy ships lay to leeward and were ignored. The weather made it impossible for them to rejoin the main body of their fleet for a considerable time. "Had we struck to the leeward ships, tell the critics," Collingwood bade Carlyle, "their weather division would have joined them and tickled our rear as we did theirs."

Nelson, in the *Captain*, following in the rear of the fire-spouting griffens, but thinking quicker than Jervis himself, "perceived," says Southey, "that the Spaniards were bearing up before the wind with the intention of forming their line, going large, and joining their separated ships; or else, of

getting off without an engagement. To prevent either of these schemes he disobeyed the signal (to tack) without a moment's hesitation and ordered his ship to be wore. This at once brought him into action with the *Santissima Trinidadada*, 136, the *San Josef*, 112, the *Salvador del Mundi*, 112, the *San Nicholas*, 80, the *San Isidro*, 74, another seventy-four, and another first-rate. Trowbridge in the *Culloden* immediately joined and most nobly supported him." Nelson's lead turned the English force into the main enemy division. By chance the *Excellent* became the leader of the line, and Collingwood had, what he called, "the good fortune to get very early into action."

He first set about the *San Salvador del Mundi*, holding his fire, as his custom was, until no more than the length of his garden separated the two ships. The *Excellent's* crew fought admirably and so pounded the *San Salvador* that she crumpled under their fire. Her colours fluttered down and her guns ceased to thunder. Collingwood formally hailed her and asked if she surrendered. A seaman standing by the Spaniard's colours bowed—a sign which Collingwood took to mean submission. Thirsting for blood, he did not stay to take possession of his prize. A frigate was welcome to her.

Away he sailed towards the next in the Spanish line, the *San Isidro*, a seventy-four, but no sooner had he sheered off than to his consternation he saw the *San Salvador* run up her flag and recharge her guns. Foreigners were not to be trusted. He would make doubly sure of the *San Isidro*. So close did he come alongside her that any of the seamen could have jumped from one ship into the other. The *Excellent* rocked as she received the *San Isidro's* fire.

The engagement was fierce, but Collingwood, glancing aloft, saw through the black smoke cloud something which caused him more concern than Spanish gunfire. Always before battle he hoisted his oldest sails, which necessarily suffered more than anything else—except human flesh—in

the course of an action. Now he chanced to see that a brand-new foretopsail had been left on the yards. "Bless me, Mr. Peffers," he called to his bo'sun, "how came we to forget to bend our old topsail? They will quite ruin that new one. It will never be worth a farthing again." If only for the sake of the foretopsail he was determined to make short work of the *San Isidro*.

The gunnery of the *Excellent*, in which he took great pride, was as devastating as ever. Ten minutes of it was enough for the Spanish seventy-four. Down came her colours. Collingwood had been deceived once. He would not be gulled a second time. He made his prize hoist the Union Jack before he ceased to maul her and signalled to the *Lively* frigate to take her in tow.

He looked around for further conquests. His sails had been shot to rags, but he crowded on every inch of canvas he had to take him to the hottest part of the battle. Here, as might be expected, Nelson was fighting. Collingwood caught a signal from Jervis to go to his friend's assistance. He did not need pressing. To reach Nelson he passed between his own line and that of the enemy until he came up with the *San Nicholas*, of 80 guns, fighting abreast of the *San Josef*, carrying 112. These two ships and a number of others had been pounding Nelson and the *Culloden* for an hour.

Nelson's plight, when Collingwood came up, was desperate. The wheel of his ship, the *Captain*, had been shot away and the foremast was gone. Hardly any ammunition remained. Sixty men, dead or wounded, filled the midshipmen's berths. The vessel was almost out of control and her companion in arms, the *Culloden*, was in equal distress. Collingwood, at this crisis, found the *Captain* being fired upon by three first-rates and a seventy-four within a pistol shot of the *San Nicholas*. Collingwood ranged so close up to the *San Nicholas* that not until the smoke cleared did he know whether he was fast to her or not. Actually, he found, it was possible to get

a bodkin—but not much more—between the two vessels. He poured into the Spaniard a “most awful and tremendous fire” with such effect that the cannon-balls passed clean through her and lodged in the *San Josef*.

The Spaniards tried to get out of each other’s way, but collided instead. They were in such a muddle that they had no time to fire their guns. Collingwood concluded their business to be as good as settled and left it to Nelson to administer the *coup de grâce*. This the little man did by boarding them at the head of his men and driving the Spaniards from deck to deck at the point of the cutlass. Nelson, on the quarter-deck of the *San Josef*, received their submission and the swords of the officers of the two ships.

Collingwood had by now placed himself alongside the foeman whom he most desired to meet—the mighty four-decker *Santissima Trinidad*. He had never seen her like and he glowed with the pleasure it gave him to tackle her.

But now his sails, masts, and rigging were in so miserable a state that he could not get as near to her as he wished, while she raked him from a distance. His ship and men suffered seriously in the exchange, but he gave back what he received. He battled with the giant for an hour and “trimmed her well.” Her pride was stripped from her. Her claws were pared. Other English ships, coming up, fired into her. The masts of the *Santissima Trinidad* were shot down and five hundred of the crew were killed or wounded. She became little more than a wreck, but still she floated and refused to strike her colours. Most gallantly did she fight back. Even after an hour’s tussle Collingwood was still losing men from her continued fire. The Spanish shot was unusually large and heavy. Collingwood had to admit that it was “no joke when they flew about one’s head.”

But now as the February sun dipped towards the horizon those Spaniards who had been left to leeward at the beginning of the battle struggled up and whipped the fatigued English-



*By courtesy of Mr. E. F. Collingwood*

Oil-painting of St. Isidro, taken by Collingwood from his prize at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent.



men. Jervis made the signal to wear. The Spaniards kept their wind, failed to tack, and stood from the victorious English, broken by five hours of incessant fighting, but strong enough to keep hold of their four prizes.

As the dusk deepened, Collingwood felt an immense weariness come over him. He had never known such exhaustion —nor such pleasure. He picked up a great double-headed shot that the *Santissima Trinidad* had hurled at him and took it into his cabin. It weighed, he found, 50 lb. He would send it to his father-in-law to put among his curiosities. For himself he would keep an oil-painting of the *San Isidro*. It was a good picture and would look well at Morpeth. He counted up the satisfactions of the day, which had been "a glorious one, such a one as seldom falls to the lot of anyone to triumph in." He had thumped the Spaniards and released his friend, Nelson, a little. The Commodore had been most kind in his acknowledgment of what he had done.

"Never," Nelson had made haste to write, "was the saying: 'A friend in need is a friend indeed,' more truly verified than by your most noble and gallant conduct in sparing the *Captain* from further loss; and I beg, both as a public officer and as a friend, you will accept my most sincere thanks. I have not failed by letter to the Admiral to represent the eminent services of the *Excellent*. . . . We shall meet at Lagos, but I could not come near you without assuring you how sensible I am of your assistance in nearly a critical situation."

Nelson had been as good as his word, better indeed, for not only had he apprised Jervis of all that Collingwood had done, but he had also written of it in most generous terms to the Duke of Clarence. "The *Salvador del Mundi* and *San Isidro* dropped astern," Nelson informed His Royal Highness, "and were fired into in a masterly style by the *Excellent*, who compelled the *San Isidro* to hoist English colours and I thought the large ship *Salvador del Mundi* had also struck;

but Captain Collingwood, disdaining the parade of taking possession of beaten enemies, most gallantly pushed up, with every sail set, to save his old friend and messmate, who was to all appearances in a critical condition."

Collingwood had also notes of praise and congratulation from Captain J. D. Dacres and Admiral Waldegrave of the *Barfleur*. Dacres referred to the "immortal honour gained by the *Excellent*" and hoped that they all might imitate him. "Nothing, in my opinion," Waldegrave wrote, "could exceed the spirit and true officership which you so happily displayed yesterday. Both the Admiral and Nelson join with me in this opinion and nothing but ignorance can think otherwise. God bless you, my good friend; and may England long possess such men as yourself—it is saying everything for her glory." He was acutely aware that he had done his duty and to the utmost of his opportunity. There was no question about his performance being acknowledged this time. He anticipated the satisfaction he would have in savouring his triumph with the appetite of one who has waited long. . . .

He had so much to be thankful for that there was scarcely time to reckon the cost of his glory. Fourteen of his men were seriously wounded, and two marines, eight seamen, and Mr. Peffers, the bo'sun, whose forgetfulness he had had to reprove, were dead. These things were inevitable in war. One could only accept them as such.

The awarding of medals was another matter. He lost no time in defining his attitude on this point. His treatment after the Glorious First of June still rankled. He was determined not to accept a decoration for Cape St. Vincent if the Admiralty persisted in withholding from him a token for Ushant.

Jervis soon had him up for an interview, and offered him a medal. "No," Collingwood replied. "I will not accept it so long as a medal for June the First is denied me. I feel that I was then improperly passed over and to receive such a

distinction now would be to acknowledge the propriety of that injustice." Jervis understood.

"That is precisely the answer I should have expected from you, Captain Collingwood," the commander-in-chief said, and informed the Admiralty how matters stood. Those at home saw they were defeated. A medal for Ushant was sent to Collingwood with one for St. Vincent. The *amende honorable* was even made with some degree of grace, and the only attempt at official face-saving was so transparent that it dimmed nothing of the triumph.

Lord Spencer, in forwarding the decorations, wrote: "I congratulate you most sincerely on having the good fortune to bear so conspicuous a part on two such glorious occasions, and have troubled you with this letter only to say that the former medal would have been transmitted to you some months ago if a proper conveyance had been found for it."

The captain of the *Excellent* crowded over Lord Howe.

Collingwood had once more retrieved a bad start. Now in middle age he was at last fairly launched. His course was set, the weather fair. He would now sail on towards the sunset—to Trafalgar, the chief command, and death in uniform. The contrary winds of fortune that had so troubled his youth had spent themselves. His sails now bellied with a favourable wind. It would sweep him forward, carry him through the time of greatest glory that the war produced, and fail only when the rosy colours had faded into twilight, before ever the moon had risen and the stars shone forth to shed on his old age their peaceful, glittering benediction.

## PART III

### I

#### THE HUMANIST

S T. VINCENT mellowed him. His manner would always be dry, reserved, and caustic, but now he was gentler with subordinates and less dogmatic in his judgments. A vein of modesty that had been hidden when Haswell, Howe, and the Admiralty doubted his ability and denied him what he believed was his due now appeared. The old swaggering bombastic style in which he had written to Sarah, the Blacketts, and Carlyle, almost vanished. He remembered that he had sent his wife the letters of congratulation which Nelson, Waldegrave, and Dacres had written him. He knew that to read them would give her pleasure, but he was alarmed lest she should show them to all and sundry in Northumberland. Such an act would have "too much the appearance of trumpeting, which I detest," he told Carlyle, and hoped that a hint from the old man would curb Sarah's pride.

It did not. She was so thankful and proud "in being wife to so deserving a man" that she could not resist copying out for the edification of her relatives "such flattering remarks of approbation." She liked to boast as well as anyone.

He remained as thin as ever, but his leanness was the outcome of his overflowing energy and not the result of illness. His constitution remained of granite. When the weather was

rough or the approach of enemy ships was rumoured he never went to bed, but, taking off his epauletted coat, wrapped himself in a flannel dressing-gown and dossed on a sofa in his cabin. Seamen of long experience marvelled to see him in times of tempest striding the deck, hatless, his grey hair streaming in the wind, the rain pouring down through the shrouds and forming in glistening beads on his brown, lined face, his eyes, keen and wide as an eagle's, forever on the watch. He was impervious to all discomforts and the racking pains of exposure, ague, cold, and rheumatism the moment he scented danger.

It was in keeping with his character that he liked to pun. There is nothing in that simple form of humour which penalises those who practise it with loss of dignity. He would have died sooner than have his dignity impaired. Yet he did not wish to appear proud nor seem stand-offish. Puns were an admirable way in which to temper the rigour of his behaviour. Although as a punster he "seldom failed to produce the playful equivoque he wished," according to a writer in the *Naval Chronicle*, his earlier biographers so denatured him in their embalming that not a single example of his punning skill was preserved.

Sir Harris Nicholas has served us better. In the letters from Collingwood given, undoctored, in Nicholas's *Letters and Despatches of Lord Nelson* two of these puns have been saved. Returning some books to Nelson, he commented, "I should suspect Mr. Twist has got a *twist* in his head," and to Mrs. Moutray, a friend of West Indian days, he wrote after Trafalgar: "I am to be created a peer, they tell me, and in making my title I hear that considerable difficulty arose in finding where my estate lay. I thought that all the world knew that I was no *Land-lord*." In the same vein he declared that his barony would be a barreny. Earlier writers may perhaps be forgiven for venturing to suppress this side of Collingwood's character.

A fault he had that cannot be glossed over was an unholy joy in scandal. He was overeager to believe the worst of anyone, his friends included. Behind their backs he criticised ruthlessly, sometimes unfairly. During a visit to Scotland he was scandalised to hear that the Lady Augusta Murray had been found in bed with the village apothecary. Even the Roddams were not free of his lash, nor any of his relatives by marriage. In the case of Sir Hyde Parker his splenetic credulity was illimitable.

"Sir Hyde Parker has now left the fleet," he wrote to his sister towards the end of 1800, "and is going to be married to Miss Onslow (about twenty-two or twenty-three), a daughter of Sir Richard, the Admiral. The gentleman should have paid his account to a chance of what has happened. Fine clothes and a smooth tongue may give her an outward semblance of a gentlewoman, but the canker is innate and will out in time."

And again : "Sir Hyde Parker's intrigues with the French women were abominable. The woman he brought to England was bought of her husband for a sum of money with which a brig was purchased and fitted out as a privateer—in which the Frenchman committed such piracies that he was at last taken and brought to Jamaica. . . . The Countess, being a good cook, prepared him a pigeon for dinner that removed the necessity for providing supper, and he was taken from the prison and buried at the cross-roads with a stake through his body. After which the Countess enjoyed uninterrupted felicity with her gallant protector."

He practised hospitality on board ship in the same way as he acted professionally. His table was plain but liberal. Himself temperate in his general habits, he was blessed with an excellent appetite and a good digestion. He drank moderately after dinner, but never afterwards indulged in wine or spirits. The achievements of the two-bottle men who were his contemporaries in that gouty age made no appeal to him.

At dinner he was as scrupulous in his attentions to the lowest guest at his table as he was to whoever sat next to him. He boasted that his dinner beer cost him sixpence a gallon. The man who remonstrated with his gardener for throwing away bad potatoes and in the heat of battle could reprove his bo'sun for omitting to bend an old foretopsail in place of a new one was in peacetime just as passionately economical of the King's stores. He ordered that stray rope-ends should be picked up from the decks and saved instead of being thrown overboard.

On one occasion, noticing that a captain when clearing for action had permitted a number of casks and arm-chests to be pitched into the sea, he wrote to him that he "apprehended" this "must have proceeded from not having made a proper arrangement and stowage of these stores which were never intended to be thrown into the sea but for the use and service of His Majesty's ships" and therefore "must observe that you will be more provident and careful of the masts and furniture in future and take care that the stores and casks are at all times so stowed that it may not be necessary to throw even a bucket overboard when you prepare for action."

His four and a half years' command of the Mediterranean cost this country only £54 by way of extraordinary disbursements, including the expenses of a mission to Morocco to obtain horses for mounting the Spanish army, his postages, and so on. A week after Trafalgar he circularised his captains proposing that £2000 should be deducted from the prize money as a subscription from the squadron to a memorial for Nelson on Port Down Hill. The Navy sniffed. It thought £2000 much too little.

It was not miserliness which prompted old Salt Junk and Sixpenny to behave like this, but a natural caution which acted as a brake on his generosity. The two traits are curiously interwoven in many people who come from Scotland and the North of England. There are few more delightful phases in

the study of our countrymen than watching how these two linked tendencies offset each other.

"If ever I mention the word economy," Collingwood wrote to Sarah, "it is that you should always be enabled to do a kind and handsome thing when the occasion arises." If his men were sick he had them fed from his own table—not that he had any great variety of delicacies to offer them, though a fowl graced his board occasionally—and visited them in the sick bay every day. When they were convalescent he put them in charge of the lieutenant of the morning watch with instructions to bring them up daily to him for examination.

He was an open-handed supporter of the hospitals at Newcastle-on-Tyne. At each advance in his career he increased the allowance he made his sisters. The pension had originally been £20 a year. They had asked for £30, and he hoped that Wilfrid would volunteer the other £10. "I have no pleasure in my successes, but as they enable me to assist those who need my help," he told them—it was September, 1783. Gradually he increased the allowance. Within five months of his death he urged them not to restrain themselves from drawing on his bankers when they wanted some extra comfort. "Know no want that I can supply," he told them. Clothes for which he had no use, such as "a very good black coat and waistcoat," that he could not wear at sea, he asked them to give away to anyone who might find them acceptable. If he believed that a man had a claim on his benevolence he was at pains to see that the obligation was discharged.

The martinet of an earlier period lost much of his youthful fierceness as he grew older. He held as tightly as ever the reins of discipline, but now he mitigated justice with mercy and more than mercy. He recognised the brutality of the treatment that was the common lot of the seamen and forgave them much. It was his officers who felt the weight of his hand—were lacerated by his cutting tongue and stabbed by his sharp-edged pen. His sarcasm was crushing. He was seen

one day to stalk across the deck and, fixing an officer with his eye, take off his hat, bow—for the formalities of courtesy must on all occasions be observed—and exclaim : “ I have been thinking whilst I looked at you how strange it is that a man should *grow* so big and *know* so little. That’s all, sir, that’s all.” And again he swept off his hat and bowed to his victim. The blunderer, with scarlet cheeks and fuming heart, followed suit.

Collingwood once lectured a favourite for excess of zeal, thinking “ it proper to do so, though I was very much pleased with him,” so he told the Admiralty. The officer had fallen in with “ a gunboat convoy and knocked them all to pieces, killed a great many men, and destroyed several boats, but in doing it he got ashore and was very near losing his ship. In the lecture I gave him, I wished to impress on his mind that he should never risk beyond the value of his object, and meant by it to temper his zeal with a little discretion.” He acted on the belief that the responsibility for any imperfections in the fleet lay with the officers and not with the men.

On being promoted to the rank of rear-admiral, two years after St. Vincent, he discovered to his horror that the captain of his flagship was a novice in the conduct of fleets and men. His vessel, he wrote to Carlyle, “ had been twice on shore and once on fire in the three months he had command of her and they were then expecting that the ships’ company should mutiny every day.” The revolt of the Channel Fleet, followed by the mutiny at the Nore, both within three months of St. Vincent, caused him, he said, the “ most poignant grief.” Severity of discipline and a demand for better pay had led to the revolt of the Channel Fleet ; those who mutinied at the Nore insisted on the dismissal of unpopular officers.

“ How unwise in the officers or how impolitic in the administration that did not attend to and redress the first complaints of grievance and not allow the seamen to throw off their obedience and to feel what power there is in so numerous

a body," Collingwood lamented in a letter to Carlyle, and elaborated this opinion in an outburst to his father-in-law: "The state of the fleet in England gives me the most lively sorrow. The seamen, I am persuaded, would never have revolted from good order; but consider with such a fleet as we have now how large a proportion of the crews of the ships are miscreants of every description and capable of every crime, and when these predominate what evils may we not dread from the demoniac councils and influence of such a mass." But when once they had revolted, whatever their provocation and excuse, it became his hope that "those villains at the Nore are reduced and punished; a terrible example to be made of them."

In 1797 a plan was hatched on board the *St. George* to remodel the Navy according to the ideas of the men of the Nore. The ringleaders were promptly rounded up and condemned to die. The trial took place late on Saturday night. Before nine o'clock next morning four bodies swayed and dangled from the yard-arm. There was no Sabbath respite for rebels in the fleet. Collingwood thought the remedy was good. Perfect order had been immediately restored. He had seen no symptom of anything irregular in the *Excellent*, but he was scared of what might have been the consequence of any outbreak in the ships. "These popular tumults spread with the violence of a conflagration," he declared. He felt no sorrow for the condemned men. And yet all his sympathies were with the seamen. He railed against the authorities—but only to his sisters and the Blacketts.

"It is impossible that Lord Howe can justify his not having taken proper notice of the memorials and petitions of the seamen, which were sent to him and which neglect was the sole cause of this great national calamity," he wrote home. "It has shaken the constitution of England and given a wound to naval discipline which will require a length of time and the most delicate treatment to heal. There are many concurrent

*From a photograph by R. Johnston*  
1936.

Collingwood's "Quarter-deck Walk," preserved in the garden of his house in Oldgate Street, Morpeth.





causes which made the thing practicable—the increase of soldiers' pay, the total neglect of seamen's, which was to be made up for by trumping their praises in nonsensical paragraphs in a newspaper, calling them England's best hope, the country's sure defence, and such stuff, led them, poor silly fellows, to believe the country would submit to whatever they should demand. . . . But the chief promoters and counsellors in all this business has been what they call Billy Pitt's men, the county volunteers, your ruined politicians, who having drank ale enough to drown a nation and talked nonsense enough to mad it, your Constitutional and Corresponding Society men finding politics and faction too rare a diet to fat upon, took the county bounty and embarked with their budget of politics and the education of a Sunday's school into the ships, where they disseminated their nonsense and their mischief. Those are the fellows who have done the business. The seamen who suffer are only the cat's paws. Making seamen's letters free of postage has very much promoted the business. . . . What kind of correspondence were you to expect from the refuse of the gallows and the purgings of a gaol (and such make a majority in most ships' companies in such a war as this). The respectable part—and comparatively harmless—the scamen, are but a small part.

"The palpable neglect shown to the best officers in the Navy, and the perfect indifference with which they were treated in the whole affair so wounds my mind that I cannot speak of it with patience. I had no idea of Lord Bridport's tamely submitting to the indignities he suffered and allowing Lord Howe to sap the foundations of all future discipline while he commanded the fleet. I hope peace is near."

He could never believe that any man serving him would mutiny. "Mutiny, sir? Mutiny in my ship?" he would shout if it was suggested that any act committed by one of his men could be so interpreted. "If it can have arrived at that it must be my fault and the fault of every one of the officers.

It is a charge of the gravest nature and as such shall be gravely inquired into."

The cruelty of the age was appalling by modern standards. Man's inhumanity to man in the English Navy at that time was unmitigated. Captain Pigot of the *Hermione* made a practice of flogging the last man down from the rigging. He was eventually killed by his own crew. The cat was king throughout the fleet. Thieves, drunks, and those who overslept were all flogged. The cat was a fearful weapon. Attached to a short wooden handle were nine tails of tough, knotted cord each about two feet long. After a night spent in irons the victims were brought before the captain. The carpenter and his mates were ordered to rig the gratings and placed in position two of the hatch covers. The offender then stripped off his shirt and advanced bare-backed to an upright grating to which his hands were tied with lengths of spun yarn.

The captain then read out the particular article of war which the sailor had transgressed, and the whole ship's company stood bare-headed in token of their respect for the King whilst he read. Then a powerful seaman gripped the cat and began to flog with all his strength at the full sweep of his arm. Thirty-six lashes were common; three hundred were often given. The very first blow would strip the skin from the naked back and draw blood wherever the knots bit the flesh. Each time the thongs fell the breath was knocked out of the man's body.

The tails were cleansed after every blow so that any accumulation of blood and flesh should not soften, however lightly, the effect. The victim's back was raw when six lashes had been given. A dozen blows left it like a gory sponge. After each twenty-four lashes a fresh bosun's mate took up the flogging. If he was left-handed so much the better. He would cross the cuts. By then the lacerated back resembled roasted meat burned nearly black before a scorching fire.

A soldier who was flogged in 1832 with the same kind of cat as that used in the Navy at the time of Trafalgar has left this record of his agony : " I felt an astounding sensation between the shoulders under my neck which went to my toe-nails in one direction and my finger-nails in another and stung me to the heart as if a knife had gone through my body. . . . He came on a second time a few inches lower and then I thought the former stroke was sweet and agreeable compared with that one. . . . I felt my flesh quiver in every nerve, from the scalp of my head to my toe-nails. The time between each stroke seemed so long as to be agonising, and yet the next came too soon. The pain in my lungs was more severe, I thought, than on my back. I felt as if I would burst in the internal parts of my body. . . . I put my tongue between my teeth, held it there, and bit it almost in two pieces. What with the blood from my tongue and my lips, which I had also bitten, and the blood from my lungs or some other internal part, ruptured by the writhing agony, I was almost choked and became black in the face. Only fifty lashes had been inflicted and the time since they began seemed like a long period of my life. I felt as if I had lived all the time of my real life in pain and torture and that the time when existence had pleasure in it was a dream long, long gone by."

In 1793 Collingwood had still believed in the necessity of the cat. We have a record of that year of the floggings he ordered. The grading of the sentences throws light on his prejudices. Twelve lashes were given for bringing liquor into the ship in disobedience of orders and for contemptuous behaviour, a dozen for being absent from duty, eleven for " mutinously propagating malicious reports of Sergeant O. tending to excite discontent among the men," ten for a man found " sleeping at his post while sentinel," nine " for the theft of half a guinea," nine for stealing a bag of clothes and money, eight and seven against two sailors guilty of drunkenness, fighting, and riotous behaviour, seven " for beating

Stephen Shore, a poor silly boy," six for "leaving post while sentinel," and six for "fighting and riotous behaviour." Now he came almost to abolish flogging in his ships. He had reversed Moises' practice and with such effect that he became reputed throughout the fleet as a disciplinarian.

Jervis, now Lord St. Vincent, sent all his worst men to Collingwood to be licked into shape. Brutes of men, hauled before Nelson, were handed over by him to Collingwood. "He will tame them if no one else can," the little man said grimly. And Collingwood did it by watering the grog of offenders and introducing as punishment fatigue duties of the meanest sort. The effect of this was to hold up culprits to the ridicule of their fellows. A flogged man was an object of sympathy. His mess mates would save him their rations of grog. But when Collingwood banished an offender from his mess, like a child sent from table, the fellow received only jeers.

Collingwood on the rare days when a man was flogged fell into a morose silence and never spoke for the rest of the day. After St. Vincent a year would pass without the gratings being rigged on his ships. "I wish I were the captain for your sakes," his lieutenant, Clavell, shouted at a knot of shirkers. "And pray, Clavell, what would you do?" asked Collingwood, overhearing his outburst. "I would have flogged them well, sir," the lieutenant replied. "No you would not, Clavell," Collingwood told him. "I know you better."

His methods of achieving discipline were entirely his own. "By the god of war," Sir Peter Parker told his seamen, "I'll make you touch your hats to a midshipman's coat if it's only hung on a broomstick to dry." In many ships the sense of power given to the midshipmen made them behave to the men like sadistic devils. The middies, often mere children, had "extraordinary privileges which they abused extraordinarily," Masefield states. "They were officers and therefore powerful. Aboard H.M.S. *Revenge*, just before Trafalgar,

under a captain so strict and just as Robert Moorsom, there was a midshipman who amused himself by climbing on to the gun-carriages and calling to him the finest and strongest of the sailors. It was this little devil's pleasure to kick and beat the poor fellows without cause. He was an officer and to resent his cruelty would have been mutiny. A midshipman had but to complain to a lieutenant to get a man a flogging."

Collingwood found a way of limiting the power of the snotties which preserved intact the full letter of the law. When a midshipman complained he promptly issued an order for the seaman to be punished, but before the order could be carried out he sent for the snotty. "In all probability," Collingwood would say, "the fault was yours. But whether it was or not I am sure it would go to your heart to see a man old enough to be your father disgraced and punished on your account. It will, therefore, give me a good opinion of your disposition if, when he is brought out, you ask me to pardon him." There was no escaping such a hint. When the offender came up for sentence the boy was forced to plead for the man.

Collingwood, who dearly loved a grave pantomime, would pause, knit his brows, rub his chin. At last he would speak. The formula was always the same. "This young gentleman has pleaded so handsomely for you," he would tell the prisoner, "that in the hope you will feel a due gratitude to him for his benevolence I will this time overlook your offence." A youth had been thwarted of his revenge. A seaman had spent the night in irons. But the law had been maintained and Collingwood's conscience kept easy. It was the best that could be done under the vicious system.

A seaman on board the *Romulus* loaded one of the forecastle guns to the muzzle and, pointing it at the quarter-deck, threatened to fire unless a punishment to which he had been sentenced was forgiven him. He was overpowered but, instead of being hanged from the yard-arm, was sent to Collingwood for discipline. In the presence of the crew of the *Excellent*

the grey-haired captain read the riot act to the mutineer. "I know your character well," he said sternly, "but beware how you attempt to excite insubordination in my ship. I have such confidence in my men that I shall hear in an hour of everything you do. If you behave well I shall treat you like the rest, but if you endeavour to incite mutiny, mark me well, I shall head you up in a cask and throw you into the sea."

He never unbent in his attitude to his seamen, yet he loved them like a father. He never swore at them nor permitted others to do so. "If you do not know a man's name," he would tell officers newly come to him, "call him sailor and not you-sir and such other names. They are offensive and improper."

A man who neglected to stow his hammock was liable to have it locked up in the store-room and left to sleep on a plank. One morning the master-at-arms reported to the officer of the watch that Thomas Jones's hammock had been found lying on the deck. "Well," said the officer, "don't mind it for once," and turned to find Collingwood at his back, twiddling his thumbs and pretending not to have heard anything. Soon afterwards the officer was promoted. "He was a clever man," comments Admiral Hercules Robinson, who tells the story, "and an excellent officer, and it was quite right, but I think that Thomas Jones stepped him up the ladder." Robinson himself attributed his advancement under Collingwood to a practice of petting his dog Bounce, and when Nanny, the ship's goat, butted him, he heaped coals of fire on her head by feeding her with biscuits.

His easing of the seaman's lot was Collingwood's real contribution to history, but it passed unnoticed.

More than once he reported to the Admiralty, in an effort to have conditions mitigated, that the younger captains, with several honourable exceptions, tried to conceal, by the severity of their discipline, their own faults and want of attention, and

actually beat the men into a state of rebellion. In vain. No one in the Navy believed they would be successful if they tried to adopt his method of discipline.

Captain Brenton, one of Jervis's biographers, thought Collingwood was the most unfit man in the Navy to have charge of ruffians. He was an innovator, and innovators are not loved. The medals on which his heart was set were given him for deeds of negligible worth historically considered. Yet the award of them accidentally broke down the dam that had pent back the kindness, the humanity, of his nature. No one bothered to make a study of his methods. He moved blindly towards a goal of which even he was not aware. Only the tears of his seamen, whenever he changed ships, rewarded him for the mite he had brought to the sum total of civilisation.

## BLOCKADE (II)

**A** WEEK or two of indecision followed the victory off Cape St. Vincent, and then the campaign resolved itself into the blockading of Cadiz. Collingwood arrived outside that port on April 1. He soon found the life one of unmitigated dreariness. Nelson with three ships was detached from the squadron and nineteen sail of the line, parading under the walls of Cadiz as they had done a year before at Toulon, were left to watch the Spanish fleet biding its time in harbour. No ship was allowed to enter Cadiz and none showed any disposition to leave. By the middle of April the Spaniards had thirty-two vessels ready for action—enough, thought Collingwood, to devour the English if they knew but how to carve.

A fortnight later the Spanish strength was estimated at "twenty-nine sail of the line and frigates enough and four or five others refitting." The blockade was maintained unchanged. Surely, the captain of the *Excellent* wondered, nothing could be more audacious on England's part or more humiliating to the enemy? Yet the Spanish were content to play a waiting game. They seemed reconciled to the impertinent English and bore their disgrace with patience. Every day the Dons expected to hear that peace had been declared. They could see no reason why they should make things disagreeable either for themselves or for others.

Almost daily the English exchanged civilities by letter with the Spanish officers. There was even an occasional dinner

party. But the Spanish ladies remained aloof. They were invited to a ball given by the English on board ship, but they did not go.

Fortunately the Spanish fishermen were not so chary. They had an eye for business and soon found that the English paid them better for their catch than their fellow-countrymen. They even brought out vegetables to the blockading ships and, what was just as welcome, news. It was flattering to learn from visiting fishermen that the Spanish seamen had been offered double pay if they would go out against the blockaders, but had declined the bribe, "reckoning it a hopeless undertaking to pit themselves against the English."

Yet Collingwood did not feel at ease. It seemed obvious to him that the enemy must come out or else Spain—the Spain of Philip, Ferdinand and Isabella, Cortés, and the Buccaneers—must be lost as a maritime power. They had so many ships and the English so few that the blockade must necessarily be critical. At Cartagena four Spanish sail of the line had been joined by seven French men-of-war from Toulon and were chafing for an opportunity to elude the English squadron and merge with the main fleet. Then the English would be opposed by forty enemy sail. The tension grew as week succeeded week and nothing happened. Nerves were so strained that officers indulged in extraordinary outbursts.

There was, for instance, the strange case of Mr. — (apparently a Northumbrian for he was known to the Blacketts) whose conduct added very much to Collingwood's vexations. "A few days since," the captain wrote to his father-in-law in June, 1797, "upon the most trivial occasion he broke out into such a fit of frenzy and rage, and behaved to me in so contemptuous and extraordinary a fashion that I desired the first lieutenant to order him off the deck. The day following he wrote a letter, not excusing his conduct but rather justifying it, requesting to be discharged into any other ship. But when, after taking a day to cool a little, I gave him to understand

that having calmly considered the nature of his offence and the necessity, under the present circumstances of the fleet, of giving a prompt check to the first instance of disobedience that tended to mutiny, I felt that the justice I owed to the public service outweighed the regard I ever had for his interests and his family, and that I only hesitated about bringing him to trial by court martial from an apprehension of the fatal consequences that might follow, he began to think very differently of the affair, was exceedingly dejected, hoped something might be done short of a court martial as he knew what would be the probable result of that, and, if I would allow him, would quit the service forever. I told him that I would consider further, and very much distressed and mortified I am at his conduct. . . . He shall never do duty in my ship again."

We have not the anonymous offender's version of the affair, but it was typical of Collingwood in a case of that kind that he should take "a day to cool a little" before passing judgment.

Perhaps it was too much imagination in the officers that was the cause of such incidents, for the seamen were both mentally and physically healthy. Collingwood was at pains to keep them so. Besides the daily supplies of fish and vegetables from the fishermen of Cadiz there were regular consignments from Barbary of bullocks, while boats came out from Portugal laden with cabbages which were sold at the exorbitant price of eighteenpence apiece. Collingwood grew weak and bored and languid. He could get no exercise save the restless pacing of a smooth deck, but his men were fat and happy.

The captain strained his wits to find occupations that would keep them out of mischief. It was his aim to take such care of his men and keep them so busy that they should have nothing to think of for themselves beyond the current duties of the day. He hit on the notion of forming a band, and as they had no instruments everyone set about making his own.

*From a photograph by R. Johnston*

Bank of the River Wansbeck at Morpeth planted with trees by Collingwood and his friend, Mr. Matheson. 1936.





The scheme was immensely popular. Each moonlight night the sailors danced (we are not told where they found their partners) and there was as much mirth and festivity as if the ship lay at Wapping. But alas ! the rats got at the bagpipes. Collingwood retaliated by declaring a war of extermination on the unmusical rodents and for a time the crew gave up making violins for rat-traps.

Thus the blockade dragged on throughout the summer. The winter came and still the position was unchanged. The Spanish trade had suffered, but when the English extended their operations they were not so successful. One poor, ill-fitted bomb began a bombardment of Cadiz, but Spain struck back at Gibraltar, " which was open to their insult as Cadiz to ours and we desisted," Collingwood wrote home.

Nelson with his three ships had been instructed to surprise and capture Teneriffe. He failed after a series of adventures which, in his friend's eyes, ranged from tragedy to comedy and properly belonged to romance. It was on this expedition that Nelson lost his arm and Collingwood recounted the incident at second hand to Blackett. " Nelson was shot in the right arm when landing and had to be carried on board," he wrote. " He himself hailed the ship and desired the surgeon to get his instruments ready to disarm him ; and in half an hour after it was off he gave all the orders necessary for carrying on their operations as if nothing had happened to him. Three weeks after when he joined us he went on board the *Admiral* and I think exerted himself to a degree of great imprudence."

It seems a curious comment on a close friend's misfortune. It hints more of reproof than of sympathy, yet there is no mistaking the underlying tone of admiration. A man of granite half admires the granite in another. They were indeed a curious couple. The chief impression the " disarming " made on Nelson was the chill of the surgeon's steel. Henceforward ships' doctors were ordered to warm their instruments in hot

water before using them. The object was to minimise the pain, not to sterilise the saws.

The winter brought no relief from the boredom of the blockade. Jervis offered Collingwood the command of the *Namur*, but he declined, not caring for the trouble of moving. It would have meant a few shillings more in the way of pay, but they would be gained by losing the *Excellent* whose crew he knew and who knew him, "which in these ticklish times I hold to be of much consequence," he declared.

The fleet slowly thinned. By January, 1798, the *Excellent* was one of only six sail of the line left to watch Cadiz. They did not trouble to conceal their strength from the Spaniards, who, all the same, were not to be tempted into leaving their port. Collingwood dismissed them as fools to remain the allies of France. He made up his mind that the hearts of the people were disposed towards England, but the Government was imbecile and the Court subject to the imperious control of France. On these grounds only was Spain being committed to help Napoleon in his projected invasion of England.

The fishermen brought word that the men-of-war within the harbour had been equipped with "a great quantity of army stores, field artillery, mortars, and shells." An "extraordinary number" of soldiers were on board and they were being disciplined with great thoroughness. Many more troops were in the neighbourhood waiting to embark, while at Cartagena, Toulon, and Venice other ships were lying ready to seize the first chance of joining those at Cadiz.

Collingwood reckoned that these would-be auxiliaries must number twenty-six sail, so that the whole force intended to muster at Cadiz would probably exceed fifty ships of the line. Three Commissioners, it was reported, had arrived from France to spur on the Spaniards in their equipping of the fleet and preparing supplies for the vessels expected from the Mediterranean. Forty-two thousand hogs had been killed

during the winter as provisions for this Armada and the utmost exertion was being made in every department. Collingwood, as these snippets of information were daily added to his stock of knowledge, became alarmed and hoped that the dauntless six would have "such an augmentation" as would enable them to meet the enemy.

"There never was a time," he told Blackett, "which required so much the unanimity of the nation. The question is not merely who shall be conqueror, with the acquisition of some island or colony ceded by a treaty and then the business concluded, but whether we shall any longer be a people, whether Britain is to be enrolled among the list of European nations—whether the name of Englishman is to continue an appellation of honour conveying the idea of every quality which makes human nature respectable or a term of reproach and infamy, the designation of slaves. Men of property must come forward with purse and sword, for the contest must decide whether they shall have anything, even a country which they can call their own."

To this end the captains and flag officers outside Cadiz subscribed £5000, "which was very well," Collingwood thought, "considering how few of us are men of fortune." It was an example which, surely, those at home would be quick to follow. He was convinced that the utmost exertion, both of purse and person, would be necessary to repel the French. The huge preparations which he knew to be going on at Brest were being repeated at a host of other centres.

England was such a little country. Everyone must do his share—a lion's share. For he was convinced that the enemy intended to invade Great Britain, and, if once they gained a footing, "what would be the unit of any man's property?" He was afraid, too, that the Navy was in a cleft stick, for if the French succeeded in equipping their great armaments at Toulon and Marseilles and attempted to pass the Straits the fleet would, he was certain, "make a fine uproar among them,"

but in the meantime the Spaniards would be free to roam at large. England seemed to be a target for all the nations of Europe to shoot their malice at.

In the spring the English fleet re-gathered at Cadiz, but now there was no chance of singeing the King of Spain's beard. Not only were the forts active in pounding any English ship that dared to sail within gunshot, but the Spanish fleet had been strengthened by the building of a large number of gunboats, carrying heavy cannon, which made an approach to the harbour in light winds a serious thing, for the new craft were propelled by a great many oars and in calms were almost as active as the English ships.

Now it was summer and still the enemy did not act.

Blockading was made more disagreeable than ever by the quarrel between Earl St. Vincent, the commander-in-chief, and Sir John Orde, one of the senior officers whose nose was out of joint through being passed over in favour of Nelson for the command of an expedition sent by St. Vincent to the Mediterranean in May to harry the French. The appointment followed an unmistakable hint from the Admiralty as to the choice of a commander. The officers did not know this and the flood-gates of professional jealousy were opened. Jervis ordered Orde home to England, but the mischief had been done.

"With the exception of Sir Roger Curtis and perhaps Collingwood," St. Vincent afterwards informed the Admiralty, "I do not believe there was an officer of any standing who did not in some sort enter into cabals to pull down my authority and level all distinctions." Collingwood's sympathy was with Orde, but his friendship with Nelson and his admiration for Jervis kept the captain of the *Excellent* out of mischief. After the battle of St. Vincent, Collingwood had told Nelson that he had a great desire to see the Admiral a marquis that summer. Now he remained loyal to his chief, but he had to suffer with the guilty and he did not like it.

"The fleet is in a most unpleasant state," he complained in July. "All that intercourse of friendship, which was the only thing of comfort left to us, is forbidden, for the admirals and captains are desired not to entertain even at dinner any who do not belong to their ships. They all complain that they are appointed to many unworthy services and I have my share with the rest." That was the way in which Jervis broke up the cliques which he sensed were leading to mutiny.

Collingwood reacted in characteristic fashion. He carried out his "many unworthy services" to the letter of his instructions but without troubling to conceal what he really thought of them. He was angry in not being chosen to go with Nelson. He believed he had been left out because to have chosen him "would have interfered with the aggrandisement of a favourite" to whom he was senior, but his loyalty to Jervis was so patent and unflinching that the Admiral even discussed Orde's case with him and showed him the aggrieved man's letters.

Collingwood was more bored than ever. Twelve months before a little Spanish trading vessel had occasionally fallen his way and afforded a momentary spasm of excitement and a topic of conversation, but now each day was a blank without an incident to mark the passage of time. The arrival of the mail from England was a grand epoch. Courts martial became distressingly frequent. Each detachment that came out seemed to bring an unending supply of rebellious spirits whom the captains were "under the grievous necessity of punishing with death." Collingwood was completely jaded and out of spirits. When Nelson sailed for the Nile and failed to take his friend with him, his spirit was crushed. The captain of the *Excellent* had no occupation but to watch the West Indian cabbage boats. His humiliation was unbearable.

Collingwood's omission on this occasion is one of the minor mysteries of naval history. Had Nelson wanted him,

he had only to ask, but he made no move. He chose the ships he wanted and the *Excellent* was not one of them. Collingwood watched with pain those who had been called preparing to leave. He was broken-hearted. The *Excellent*, he claimed, was in as perfect order for any service as those which were sent. He yielded in zeal to no man, and his friendship and love for Nelson gave him a particular interest in serving the Navy's idol. But, instead, he was sent to cruise off the St. Luccars—"to intercept the market boats, the poor cabbage carriers. Oh, humiliation! But for the consciousness that I did not deserve degradation from any hand and that my good estimation would not be depreciated in the minds of honourable men by the caprice of power, I should have died with indignation," he told his friend, Captain Ball.

But he was a milder man than the Collingwood whom Howe had slighted. This time he did not mope over his discomfiture, but thrust it from his mind. He was generous in the praise he showered upon his friend when he heard of his victory. "Remember me most kindly to Sir H. Nelson," he asked Ball in his letter of lamentation, "to Foley, Troubridge, and all my friends. Tell them how truly I congratulate them." He declared that the dash to the Nile had raised the expectation of England to the highest pitch and that the event had exceeded every hope. "Many a victory has been won and I hope many are yet to come, but there never has been, nor will be perhaps again, one in which the fruits have been so completely gathered, the blow so nobly followed up, and the consequence so fairly brought to account."

In the same mood of panegyric he sat down to send Nelson his congratulations. "I cannot," he wrote, "my dear friend, express how great my joy is for the complete and glorious victory you have obtained oyer the French—the most decisive, and in its consequences perhaps the most important to Europe that was ever won: and my heart overflows with thankfulness to the Divine Providence for his protection of you through

the great dangers that are ever attendant on services of such eminence.

"So total an overthrow of their fleet and the consequent deplorable situation of the army they have in Africa will, I hope, teach those tyrants in the Directory a lesson of humility and dispose them to peace and justice that they may restore to those states which they have ruined all that can now be saved from the wreck of a subverted Government and plundered people.

"That success may ever attend you is the constant prayer of your faithful and affectionate friend."

Autumn gales at last brought him respite from the boredom of blockading and the watching of cabbage carriers. The *Excellent* was so battered that in December she was forced into Spithead for overhauling. Her defects were reported to the Navy Board. They made so imposing a list that it appeared three months' work would be necessary to put her right. Collingwood did not wish his ship to be paid off entirely, for he preferred her to the large new vessels that were then coming into fashion. For a month he fidgeted, wondering what the next move would be. He was offered the command of the *Atlas*, but pleaded that he had urgent and indispensable business in Northumberland making it particularly inconvenient for him to go to sea, and hinted that he would long since have requested leave of absence had he not wished to stay with the *Excellent* until her men were disposed of.

He spent Christmas and New Year at Spithead, fretting to be at home. On Twelfth Night he went to a children's party at Portsmouth, but the sight of the youngsters reminded him of his own and he left in the middle of the fun, he was so badly out of spirits. At last came orders for him to discharge his crew and he hurried home. Sitting back in the jolting coach he hoped that it would be long before he went to sea again. He required, he felt, some respite from the anxiety which a ship occasioned.

Collingwood had a month of great happiness. Both at Morpeth and at Newcastle he was flattered by his reception. He accepted so many invitations and received so many visitors that he "scarce sat down half an hour at a time except at a feast." His children were of an age that made them interesting to their father and the thought occurred to him that he should set about the planning of their education. "Children, like all other animals," he believed, "ought to be taught very young. The impression is easier made: it is not the result of study." He had them removed from their school at Newcastle so that he and Sarah could instruct them personally.

Sir Edward Blackett, his wife's uncle, sent him a good horse and he went riding. The exercise and change of air made him stronger and better than he had been for a long time. He found his neighbours at Morpeth very agreeable company, though one of them, William Burdon, was an extreme Radical. When he went with Sarah to dinner at the Burdons, he was astonished to see in the room portraits of Tom Paine and Horne Tooke. Burdon had been taught by the Rev. Mr. Moises and was related to Collingwood by marriage. That dinner-party must have had some embarrassing moments, especially when Collingwood heard a fellow-pupil of Moises defending Napoleon and Free-thinking. Johnson and Wilkes had sat down to dinner together and developed a "kindness" for each other. Similarly Collingwood seems to have been more puzzled than put out by his, to him, eccentric neighbour and relative. He summed up Burdon as a "strange character" and left it at that.

Much as he liked being at home, he still wished to be back in the service. He recognised that this hankering for the sea would increase when the novelty of being home wore off. "There is a nothingness," he declared, "in a sailor ashore at such a time that will, if it lasts long, weary me." The French fleet had put to sea in greater force than had been expected,

but he thought that whenever the English met them no one would wait to count the enemy. He had queer hopes in the results of the campaign. So when, after four idyllic weeks, on the second anniversary of Cape St. Vincent, the mail brought him news of his promotion to the rank of rear-admiral of the white, he at once left Sarah and the girls, the Blacketts, the country houses, and the civic ceremonies, and hoisting his flag on the *Triumph*, returned with Sir Charles Cotton to his old hunting-ground, the Mediterranean.

His respite was over almost before he had regained his landlegs. He had been happy at home, but England was in panic. How could he stay at Morpeth in such a crisis? The sight of Napoleon massing troops and ships at Brest for an invasion of England sent shivers of apprehension down the country's spine. Collingwood believed as firmly as anyone that a foreign army—the most formidable that had ever done so—was about to march on British soil.

Writing to Blackett from off Port Mahon on July 11, 1799, he observed that the French had joined with the Spaniards at Carthagena: if his father-in-law heard of their arrival at Brest, he must not be surprised. Ten days later the prophecy was fulfilled. The French and Spanish fleets, numbering forty ships of the line, sailed from Carthagena for Brest. The English squadron did not hear of the move until July 30, when they gave chase, reaching Brest on August 14, only to find that the enemy had beaten them by twenty-four hours.

Collingwood explained to Blackett that Port Mahon was "a very narrow harbour, from which you cannot get out without difficulty. There we remained until the enemy had got so far a start that it was not possible to come up with them. We arrived at Brest the day after them and finding them snug came here (Torbay)—at all which there has been great lamentation in the fleet." He was afraid that they would not be welcome in England. The Navy had returned from "a field fair for great deeds" after effecting nothing.

"The fleets of France and Spain seemed to be in our power," he told Sir Edward Blackett in a letter dated August 17, 1799, "and we had a force that promised everything. But the truth is our efforts were not great. I do not pretend to give reasons why they were not; the way of them was obvious to everybody, but we did not go that way. Lord St. Vincent, sick on shore, continued to command and give orders to the fleet at sea and acted on intelligence which the Spaniards chose should be received at Minorca; whilst Lord Keith, at sea with the fleet, daily received his information from those who had no interest in deceiving—pursued the fleet to the Bay of Albingo on the coast of Genoa, and when their look-out frigate was in view from our fleet, bethought of Minorca's safety, bore away for its protection, and left the French to follow their schemes at leisure. Our whole operations were of this class, and managed with the same degree of skill.

"It was obvious to everybody that the French might have been come up with before they left Cartagena, and as obvious to most men that they never would be come up with. Lord St. Vincent's sagacity and penetration I am sure saw this man failing in everything without displeasure. He would have ill brooked the laurels which presented themselves to us being gathered by another's hand under his nose as it were.

"To those of the fleet who only looked how best their country's interest might be supported, whose only object was the destruction of the enemy's fleet, it has been a continued series of vexations and disappointments. I have been told some sharp correspondence has passed between Lord Keith and Sir William Parker on the subject.

"The short story is that the whole business has been dreadfully marred, and the British Navy suffered much in our opinion, and no doubt will be sharply handled by our friends on shore." Once more disappointment made him snarl.

The fleet was still at Torbay in November. Collingwood's

lust for battle had by then been blown away by the weather. It was so stormy that he regarded it as "high luck" to be in port at all. Had they been at sea, the ships would have been ruined and there was no fear of the enemy's leaving while the storms continued.

Some French and Spanish frigates had been captured before the fleet returned to port. They were found to be carrying £64,000 in specie. Collingwood's share was about £4000. It was the only "little bit of good" he had to report throughout that irksome winter. Yet the political situation seemed to be improving. "Where is now," he demanded of Carlyle in December, "the August Directory who was to give law to the nations of Europe and the ancients, that bright constellation of wisdom? A set of villains who have halloo'ed the poor, misled the multitude to robbery, plunder, and murder and all vanished in a moment, their power sunk into the dust by Gipsy Buonaparte's hocus-pocus."

Then in the spring Sarah fell ill and added to his mental distress. He prayed for the war to end. It was anguish enough for him to be for ever separated from his family; when Sarah was ill his misery was complete. He reflected painfully on his long absence from all that could make him happy. There was not a day when he did not lament the continuation of the war.

Political disturbances in Ireland in the autumn of 1800 sent him in the *Barfleur*, which he had rejoined, to Bearhaven, in Bantry Bay, in the hope that the presence of the force would be enough to cool the ardour of the insurgents. It was Collingwood's first visit to Ireland. Irishmen he began by hating and ended by admiring as gallant fighters. That autumn he thought them a turbulent people, "a sort of Vulcanic composition that bursts into flame and violence of its own destruction." His eye noted that though the harbour was an excellent one, the country about it consisted of rude, barren hills. The natives appeared to him to be as wild as

the land they lived in, going about half naked, and living entirely on milk and potatoes. He thought it a pity that there was no market near at hand to encourage the cultivation of the land in the valleys. As it was the wild Irish grew only enough for their own subsistence, and if the potato crop failed there was a famine in the land.

There was no drive behind the threatened rebellion. In December he was back in Cawsand Bay, sheltering from the winter storms, which that year were particularly bad.

There was a temporary improvement in his health, which he attributed to the wearing of a flannel waistcoat. It was a remedy which he recommended to his sisters, who were always complaining of colds. All the Collingwoods, he fancied, had "flimsy" constitutions, though it is not the aptest adjective to describe his own. Before he had taken to wearing his waistcoat he had been bilious, nervy, and subject to violent stomach and bowel disorders. Now he seemed to be completely cured.

Letters from Newcastle recorded social changes. All the old family homes had new masters. The war had turned the world topsy-turvy. Nobodies were now men of means. Servants were masters and their old employers reduced to poverty. He ordered three loads of coal to be sent to his Aunt Phyllis and a hogshead of wine to his sisters.

But the flannel waistcoat turned out to be no sovereign cure. Early in 1801 he was complaining once more that the infirmity we are most subject to, I mean weak nerves," ripped him with a mood of black despondency. "God knows how much I suffer from my nerves," he exclaimed, "what hours of sadness and depression of spirit I pass unhappily away. . . . I have been very poorly lately—weak in the greatest degree—and never sleep at nights. The only time I am free from this weight, this oppressive something is if I bore a mountain on my shoulders, is the few hours I

am despatching my business, and at that time I know no ill. All is brisk with me then."

The stormy winter ended and in the milder weather Collingwood returned with the fleet to Brest. The days crawled out their span. The sun's course seemed to be arrested. There was no prospect for Collingwood of a change for the better. Nothing good could happen short of peace. The fleet was stale. The rear-admiral was dismally aware that every officer and man was impatient for release from a situation which daily became more wearisome to all. He saw disgust growing fast around him.

Blockading was a service necessarily attended with many anxieties, painful watchings, and deprivation of everything like comfort, but there was no softening of these rigours so far as it lay within the power of the Admiralty. Indeed a contrary policy was adopted. There was, for instance, "no exercise of the military part of the duty, no practise of those movements, by a facility in which one fleet is made superior to another. Whoever comes here ignorant on these points, must necessarily remain so, for he will find other employment about blankets and pigsties and tumbling provisions out of one ship into another. How the times are changed." And he recalled that once, when officers met, they greeted each other by asking news of the French—were they likely to put to sea? Now their only interest lay in debating what prospects there were of peace. Most ardently he wished to be home—blessed by the affection of his wife and little girls. The hard, unremitting service was too great a sacrifice to be borne for ever. He had to give up all that was pleasurable to him and engage in a battle with sea wastes and tearing winds, with tempers and dispositions as boisterous and intractable. He would not have disputed with Dr. Johnson when the dictionary-maker declared that a ship was worse than a gaol.

"Sir," the lexicographer told Boswell, "there is in a gaol better air, better company, better convenience of every kind."

The two men could have looked down from the quarter-deck and agreed that they saw "the utmost extremity of human misery." In the nadir of his melancholy he resolved that when the war was ended he would think no more of ships, but pass the rest of his days with his family. In those better times he, Sarah, and the children would talk over his long separation from all that was happiness as a bondage and a peril that were past.

Despite a working holiday at Plymouth fitting out the fleet early in 1801, his health failed. He could not shake off a "dreadful languor" that crippled him. Two years more of such a life, he thought, would exhaust him completely. He would be fit only to be nursed, and he had, he believed, all too little claim on anybody to take that trouble. His daughters, because of his exile, could never be to him what Blackett's were to their father. Little Sarah and Mary Patience had not had their affection for him fostered by daily acts of kindness. It would be held up to them as a duty to look after him. They could not possibly have the same feeling for a person of whom they had only heard. The rear-admiral, pacing the quarter-deck with restless, nervous feet, had his heart rent with longing to be home.

By January 25 the fleet was ready, but the French gave no sign of ever quitting Brest. It was arranged that Sarah, with the elder girl, should travel from Northumberland to Plymouth and remain with him until the time for sailing came. He was all impatience for her coming. Merely to see her, for however short a spell, would be a matchless blessing, so great was his need. The prospect cured him of all his complaints. That destiny which so ironically shapes our ends waited until the day of her arrival before it thought to annoy him.

That afternoon at two o'clock Collingwood was handed an express ordering him to sea immediately. He was stricken. Tantalus in hell was not more tormented. Nelson, at Spithead, heard what had happened and knew how his friend

must be suffering. He picked up his pen and dashed off a letter. "I truly feel for you and as much for dear Mrs Collingwood," he wrote. "How sorry I am. . . . Can't you contrive and stay to-night: it will be a comfort if only to see your family for one hour? Therefore had you better not stay on shore and wait for her?"

The unhappy man clutched at the straw. He spun out a court martial until the evening tide had ebbed. It would be impossible now to sail until morning. Then he hurried on shore and waited with Nelson for Sarah's arrival at the Fountain Inn where Collingwood had taken rooms for her. The friends were at dinner when the clatter of hoofs and wheels on the cobbles outside announced that the coach had come. Collingwood flew from the room. Sarah flung herself into his arms. The world of woe he had been suffering in for so long vanished. Human nature was not capable of greater joy than was his that night.

Sarah, Nelson, and Collingwood sat round the fireside "cosing," while the child taught Phillis, her dog, to dance. Merely to hear his wife's prattle about the incidents of her journey was bliss to him. He let her run on unchecked. Nelson rose and stole away. The clock skipped hours and it was dawn and he must go and not half of what he felt in his heart for her had been told. Yet the sight of his beloved wife and of his little daughter had composed his mind. One night of love had been his. He was dizzy with the ecstasy of it. His prolonged abstinence had made it all the sweeter. But there was no escaping the miserly limits that had been set to his joy. The moon waned. Again the tide flowed. He buttoned his coat about him. In the winter dawn they parted and he went to sea.

The happiness of that night still glowed in his mind three months later as he rode at anchor off Brest. It had been the most tiresome cruise he had ever experienced. For three successive springs the lover of trees had seen scarcely a green

leaf except through a glass at the distance of some leagues. There was no more insipid service to his mind than that of watching a port. The postal system for the fleet had been allowed to lapse. No letters were received and no newspapers. He knew nothing of either public or personal matters as they affected him at home. Immured within the sides of his ship, he had no knowledge of the world and its ways.

Denied all other interests, he turned over and over in his mind the memory of his night with Sarah. He was thinking of it for the hundredth time when an account reached him of Nelson's success at Copenhagen. The news almost turned his head with joy. "The quiet domestic cares of peace" must surely follow. He was so moved that he sought to express his abounding happiness in some tangible form. Ah! he had it. He scrawled a request to Blackett to send Scott, his gardener, a guinea, "for these times must punish the poor old man and he will miss my wife who was very kind to him."

His political insight was right. Nelson's victory and the expulsion of the French from Egypt led to a general stalemate. Peace negotiations were begun and the preliminaries signed on October 1. The moment the townspeople of Brest heard the news, they sent out a flag of truce to inform the English. Compliments on the approaching friendship of the two countries were exchanged. An officer sent to do the honours for England reported on his return that he had been treated with the greatest hospitality and kindness, being feasted and entertained with the utmost liberality. Collingwood's heart was filled with gladness. He hoped that he had seen the end of the last war that would be fought in his lifetime. He tried to think of some peace-time occupation which, having at least the pretence of being business, would engage his mind and ward off the constitutional lethargy to which he believed he was subject.

Yet months passed and still he remained at sea. There

was no discharge for the fleet until the definitive treaty had been concluded. He was impatient for the time when this would be signed and all his voyages ended. It was not until March, 1802, that the Treaty of Amiens brought him release. A listless, weary Collingwood went home to Northumberland.

## HOME LIFE

THE peace-time occupations he invented for the prevention of his constitutional lethargy were the improvement of his estate and the education of his children. He was intensely house-proud. The lease of his house had been due to expire two months after his return, but while he had languished off Brest Sarah had made a bargain which enabled them to remain. No other place they had been offered was so suitable, but the bargain had involved the buying of two old houses and the land behind them facing his home across the street in Oldgate. It grieved Collingwood's economical soul that these acquisitions should cost him £1850, but Sarah assured him that the additional property was necessary for them to "cleanse the neighbourhood," and he consoled himself that in return for the unwanted cottages he would have a little field that opened up wide possibilities in the way of afforestation.

As soon as he had rid his lungs of their coating of salt, he engaged workmen and set about "opening out the back part of the premises by pulling down the old crazy walls and dog-houses and building a low wall to separate the garden when we get the ground opposite to us." By the end of the summer, he could claim that the work he had caused to be done to his property had proved "very much to its improvement. The old cottages that were opposite to us are removed and not a vestige of them left. In their place is a low parapet wall with iron railings on it which opens our view to what will be

a very pretty little field at the end of which are the river and the high banks covered with wood."

Evidently the tree-planting on the Postern Walk, in which he had aided and encouraged Matheson, had done well. Now that the old cottages were gone and their gardens properly laid out, he had from his front windows as pleasant a view as was to be found in the county. Across the street to the right was Matheson's lovely stone-built Stuart house with its mullioned windows and then a long, green, shady stretch, rich in fruit trees, arbours, and sapling oaks, reaching to the bend in the river and then over the sparkling water, the steep, green, semicircular heights, tree-mantled, lifting their branches in salute to the shattered castle. Here was England, Northumbrian England. The scene entwined itself about his heart. There was no better spot in all the world. He was its slave. He would fight for it on the sea and in peace-time he would weed it, and plant it, and make it beautiful.

A year later there came a shock. "I have directed Sarah," he wrote to Blackett in October, 1803, when once more he was blockading, "to ask Mr. Mitford if he will sell his field, for having done so much to the house I should be very much mortified to have a slaughter-house next door." Fate always seemed to have something unpleasant up her sleeve for him. Sarah's negotiations were apparently successful.

Once he had done with the building operations, he took life quietly, tramping the country-side, planting acorns in the hedgerows from which he hoped oaks would grow for the future maintenance of the Navy, sketching occasionally, gossiping frequently, and spending whole days in his grounds. At the bottom of his back garden he had a little stone summer-house that plunged sheer into the river and between this and the stables he would pace up and down for hours. It was, he said, his quarter-deck! His bare head would sink until his chin touched his chest. He would clasp his hands behind him as hour after hour, lulled by the murmur of the river,

rustling leaves, and singing birds, he walked to and fro pondering some question of seamanship, politics, or history. For him there was always another world beyond his immediate horizon.

His children fascinated him and soon the planning of their education filled his thoughts. Mr. Moises had given a permanent Puritan bias to his mind. Now he forbade his children to read novels, for these, he declared, corrupted tender minds, exercised the imagination instead of the judgment, made young readers desire to become like the heroines of romance, and turned their heads before they could distinguish truth from fiction devised merely for entertainment. Time enough for his girls to read novels when they were older. As for what were called books for young persons, he dismissed those as so much nonsense. Such books were just a waste of time for all the help they gave in preparing a young lady for the world.

Sarah and Pat would be better employed in singeing a capon for dinner, than in reading such nonsense. His children were to read history, travels, essays, and Shakespeare's plays "as often as they pleased." They were not, however, to have access to two books at the same time, but when once a subject had been begun it must be finished before anything else was undertaken. He recommended that the girls should frequently read aloud, trying to "preserve the natural tone of voice as if they were speaking on the subject themselves without a book," for he held that nothing was more absurd than altering the voice to a "disagreeable or monstrous drawl because what they said was taken from a book." In addition, they should strengthen their memory by getting by heart "such speeches and whole sentiments from Shakespeare or Roman History as deserve to be imprinted on the mind."

He was haunted by a fear that his children should grow into women of Fashion. He shuddered at the thought that



By courtesy of the Art Galleries Committee Newcastle City Council  
Engraved Portrait of Collingwood before Trafalgar.  
After F. Howard.  
In the Laing Art Gallery and Museum, Newcastle



either of them might become a Lady Rattle, turning her home into a gambling-house and nightly staking jewels, furniture, even his precious oaks, at faro, hazard, loo, or whist. The Rear-Admiral detested snuff-taking ladies who could comprehend nothing beyond Pam or Spadille. His girls must be given a knowledge of the world in which they lived so that they could take care of themselves when he was "in heaven," and to this end he directed that they were to do everything for themselves. Better by far that they should be blue-stockings, better by far that they should be prigs, than be tainted with Rattleism. Care must be taken to see that his girls did not give themselves foolish airs. They must be encouraged to seek excellence in knowledge, virtue, and benevolence to all, and especially to those who were humble and needed their aid. This was "true nobility" and "a duty incumbent" on them. To show what he meant in this way, when they saw Scott weeding his oaks, they were to give the old man a shilling.

It was important to see that the girls were constantly employed. The human mind, he believed, improved if kept in action but grew dull and torpid if left to slumber. In his opinion stupidity itself could be cultivated. Therefore his daughters must write out accounts daily of all their proceedings. French composition must be practised. They should converse in French whenever they had an opportunity, but they must never forget to admire nothing that was French except the language. It would likewise be an excellent thing if they were taught Spanish, for that was "the most elegant language in Europe and very easy."

Another subject they must study was geometry, which was of all sciences the most entertaining, and arithmetic which, independently of its great use to everybody in every walk of life, was "one of the most curious sciences that could be conceived." He explained to his children that the characters 1, 2, 3, etc., were of Arabic origin and that by the help of



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these, adding, subtracting, or dividing, results were obtained "so far beyond the comprehension of the human mind without them" that he was persuaded "even if arithmetic were of no real use it would still be exercised for entertainment and would be a fashion for accomplished people instead of cakes and cards at routs." Why, guests might even be invited to take coffee and a difficult question in the rule of three or extracting a square root. . . . But, joking aside, once Sarah and Pat had mastered the groundwork of mathematics, they would be ready to go on to the study of astronomy which would "give them an idea of the beauty and wonder of the creation."

Education to Collingwood had a threefold purpose. First, it cultivated the mind so that "right and wrong might be distinguished" and a "habit acquired of doing acts of virtue and honour." No person, he argued, ever did "a kind, a benevolent, or a charitable action without feeling a consciousness that it was good." The doing of good, he told his daughters, created a pleasure in the mind that nothing else could produce, and the pleasure was always greater when the act which caused it "was veiled from the world's eye." Angels felt such a delight when they wiped away the tear from affliction or warmed the heart with joy. . . .

The second part of education consisted in becoming competent in the management of one's affairs. The girls were to know how to direct the economy of the household and to keep exact accounts of everything that concerned them. Whoever could not do this was dependent on someone else, and all who were dependent could not be perfectly at their ease. Lady Rattle left the management of her home to a poor relation or a head servant. The careful Collingwood was appalled by such a practice.

The third part of education was of no less value than the others. It was the art of manners such as would recommend his daughters to the respect of strangers. Boldness and

forwardness were exceedingly disgusting, but shyness and bashfulness were repulsive and unbecoming. He hoped that his daughters would qualify themselves to adorn society and be respected for their good sense as they were admired for their manners. They were to remember that gentle manners were the first grace that a lady could possess. If they differed from or agreed with the opinions of others they should say so mildly. A positive contradiction was vulgar and ill-bred.

There were, he admitted, many hours in every person's life which were not spent in doing anything important, but these must not be the excuses for idleness. Little accomplishments, such as music and dancing, were intended to fill up the hours of leisure. Nothing wearied him more than to see a young lady at home sitting with crossed arms or twirling her thumbs for want of something to do. He pitied her, poor thing, for he was sure her head was empty.

His daughters in their studies must be diligent, for just as a sportsman never hit a partridge without aiming at it, so skill was acquired by repeated attempts. It was the same in every art. Unless the girls aimed at perfection they would never attain it, but frequent attempts would make it easy. They must never, therefore, do anything with indifference, whether mending a tear or finishing the most delicate piece of art. They were to do all things as perfectly as possible. When they wrote a letter they were to give it their greatest care. The subject must be sense expressed in the plainest, most intelligible and elegant manner of which they were capable. When in a familiar letter they were playful or jocular he warned them to take care that their wit was not so sharp it would give pain to anyone. Before they passed a sentence he advised them to examine it word by word to see that nothing vulgar or inelegant was said.

"To write a letter with negligence," he declared, "without proper stops, with crooked lines, and great flourishing dashes, is inelegant. It argues either great ignorance of what is

proper or great indifference to the person to whom it is addressed and is consequently disrespectful. It makes no amends to add an apology for having scrawled a sheet of paper, of bad pens, for you should mend them. I think I can know the character of a lady pretty nearly by her handwriting. The dashers are all impudent and the scribblers flatter themselves with the vain hope that, as their letter cannot be read, it may be mistaken for sense."

He suggested that his children should be encouraged to keep diaries, for nothing, he held, more improved the mind or exercised the judgment. The entries must not be frivolous or trivial, but they should note and comment on the progress of events. When in accordance with his wish that the children should acquire a knowledge of the world they went to London with their mother, he directed that even on the journey their education should not be suspended, but while on the road they should study the geography of England through which they travelled and record in their diaries not what they ate and drank but the nature of the countryside, its appearance, its produce, and "some gay description of the manners of the inhabitants." In London they were to be shown "everything curious."

But though this "ornamental part of education" was necessary it was only secondary to the main purpose. He wished to see his daughters' minds "enlarged by a true knowledge of good and evil that they may be able to enjoy the one if it be happily their lot and submit contentedly to any fortune rather than descend to the other." He did not mean that "they should be Stoics or want the common feelings for the sufferings that the flesh is heir to." What he did intend was to provide them with "a source of consolation for the worst that could happen." He did not wish his children to grow like "the majority of people and particularly fine ladies" who, he declared, only adored God "because they are told it is proper and the fashion to go to church, but I

would have my girls gain such knowledge of the works of creation that they may have a fixed idea of the nature of that Being who could be the author of such a world. Whenever they have that, nothing on this side of the moon will give them much uneasiness of mind." He aimed at inspiring them with a love of everything that was "honourable and virtuous, though in rags, and with a contempt for vanity and embroidery." Theirs was to be a religion founded on reason.

When the sky lowered over Morpeth and rain fell in fat, coin-like drops, he rushed out with his children into the garden so that they "could admire thunder and lightning as any other of God's stupendous works." And at midnight he would rouse them, tots though they were, and walk with them, hand in hand through the churchyard—two little pig-tailed girls to whom a fearless, unimaginative father was demonstrating that even there they could walk at any hour without meeting anything worse than themselves. . . .

Thus he spent twelve happy months until, in the Spring of 1803 the endless war with France was resumed. He began to dream about a battle at sea. He forgot his vow to think no more of ships. He forgot the misery he had endured in the last blockade. What was a pruning-hook when he might wield a sword? With Napoleon crouching to spring at England's throat he was prepared to suspend the elaborate education of his daughters. While he had health and strength he would serve his country. The nation came before his pleasures and his family. If he served England successfully, as he had ever done faithfully, his children, he argued, would never want for friends. He rushed off to take up his command, packing his old, salt-stained, worn-out clothes and wasting no time at the tailor's having new ones made.

He left Morpeth, which he was never to see again, full of the old fire and sailed for Brest in the *Venerable*. "Look,"

Admiral Cornwallis exclaimed as his ship came in sight, "here is Collingwood, the last to leave and the first to rejoin me." Thus eagerly, of his own accord, he closed the interlude for which he had prayed and embraced a life against which he was to rail for seven miserable years.

## PART IV

### I

#### BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

THE last phase of the naval war with France was now beginning. More by accident than design the conflict was to culminate at Trafalgar. When Collingwood sailed to rejoin Cornwallis outside Brest his mission, and the mission of the Navy, appeared to be the repulse of a Napoleonic invasion of England. From the Scheldt to the Garonne, at Lorient, St. Malo, Nantes, Bordeaux, Rochefort, and Marseilles, in every harbour, port and creek Bonaparte was massing men and ships in overwhelming numbers. England was white with fright. The old Armada beacons were rebuilt to warn the nation as soon as Boney approached. In their shadow volunteers wheeled and drilled. Amongst them were William Pitt, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and William Wordsworth of Grasmere. Plans were drawn up to ensure the safety of the King and the Royal Family and for guarding the treasure and books of the Bank of England. Shepherds on lonely hills riddled outhouse doors with their firelock practice. Englishmen in every walk of life had the jumps.

The threat passed. Spain was drawn into the conflict as an ally of France. The scope of the blockade was extended. Outside Brest, Rochefort, Ferrol, the Straits of Gibraltar, the mouth of the Channel, and along the Irish coast squadrons of ships from England's Atlantic Fleet waited patiently to

follow the ships of France and Spain if they left harbour, prevent them from uniting, and to bring them to action at the first possible chance.

That chance never came their way. "They were dull, weary, eventless months," wrote the naval historian Mahan, "those months of watching and waiting of the big ships before the French arsenals. Purposeless they surely seemed to many, but they saved England. The world has never seen a more impressive demonstration of the influence of sea-power upon its history. Those far distant, storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the domination of the world." "I shan't say the French can't come," boasted Lord St. Vincent, "I only say they can't come by sea."

Napoleon made feint after feint in a desperate effort to elude the blockade. Villeneuve lured Nelson half-way round the world only to slip back into harbour. Then Pitt, abetted by Tsar Alexander, attempted to save southern Italy from French domination. Napoleon countered by ordering Ville-neuve to join the Spaniards at Cadiz and proceed into the Mediterranean. Nelson, with every stitch of canvas set, gave chase and the two fleets met at Trafalgar. His "Pell-mell action" left Britain supreme at sea. The way was paved for Wellington in the Peninsula—his army could be kept supplied and provisioned by the fleet which was always at his back to support him. And Trafalgar gave to England Sicily and Malta—a *barrière infranchissable*, as Napoleon called it, against his Eastern designs. We can see the pattern plainly as we look at the fabric of events at this distance in time, but it was blurred and confused to Collingwood and the others who had their being in the thick of them.

### BLOCKADE (III)

**C**OLLINGWOOD, cruising in August, 1803, off the entrance to Brest harbour, was as nervy as a man who has to feel his way round a precipice in the dark. Only vague information was available concerning the state of the enemy ships. One concrete fact he learned—that there were twenty-four or twenty-five great vessels in the harbour—kept him alert night and day. He said good-bye to bed and comfortable naps and never lay down except in his clothes.

Cornwallis was cruising by himself off Ushant and Collingwood was in command of the inshore squadron. The wind was westerly, and he found it impossible to prevent all enemy craft from getting into Brest. The harbour had two entrances at some distance from each other and always one was out of sight. He took the utmost pains to prevent access and an anxious time he had of it. Seven large ships were disabled on one of these cruises. The tides and rocks of this part of the coast had plainly more danger in them than a battle once a week. Often Collingwood spent the whole night on the quarter-deck, with no companion save Clavell, his lieutenant.

"Won't you go to your cabin, sir?" Clavell once asked him. "The look-out is good. You must be nearly exhausted."

"I fear you are," Collingwood replied; "you have need of rest. So go to bed, Clavell, and I will watch by myself."

The man of granite made light of sleeping on a gun as the *Venerable* pitched and rolled. Atlantic waves, swinging

towards the coast, slapped the sides of the ship and, breaking, rushed down the deck, curved and sibilant, like the great white wing of a bird. The cold, the wet, and the buffeting did not let him sleep long. From time to time he would rise and sweep the horizon with his night-glass lest the enemy should escape in the dark. Frequently a week would go by without his ever having his clothes off. His conscientiousness was invaluable. Whom could Cornwallis send to relieve him? There was no one who could take his place so well. Each ship in the squadron was relieved more than once before a proper successor could be found for Collingwood.

He was so strong that the conditions made no difference to his health. In the pocket of his greatcoat was a batch of letters from Sarah. With a hurricane-lamp for light he read them over in the night watches and was pleased with what she had to tell him of the home he loved so well. He hoped that Sarah would make it as comfortable as possible and enjoy peace and happiness there—whatever might happen in the world abroad. It would cost a great deal of money, but he had provided for that. Sarah's comfort was his chief luxury and, indeed, the only one which his present situation would allow him to gratify.

After eighteen weeks of such service he was able to boast that he had not a sick man in his ship. Now the cold weather was beginning—it was October—and his men seemed pitifully short of warm clothing. He himself shivered as the wind cut through his threadbare coat. If only he had not been in quite such a hurry to leave England he might have been better set up to face the rigours of this service. . . .

A batch of volunteers from Newcastle had lately joined him. They proved a set of stout young men and a great addition to the strength of the *Venerable*, which was now very well manned. One of them, however, was a nurseryman from Ryton, in County Durham who had been pressed for service because, as a youth, he had been to sea for a short

time. His fate angered Collingwood, who thought that he would have been better employed growing the vegetables the navy needed. "They have broken up his good business and sent him here, where he is of little or no service," the Rear-Admiral lamented. "I grieve for him, poor man."

The fear of invasion still gripped England. Collingwood wrote to his father-in-law with a pet plan of his own for coastal defence. His mind went back to Bunker Hill. "I would strongly recommend," he suggested, "that on all the points of bays where there is a probability of their landing, should be thrown up close redoubts, two of them in front towards the beach 350 yards apart, and one in the rear, forming an equilateral triangle with the others. Those towards the beach should have a thirty-two pound caronade and an eighteen-pounder; that in the rear two eighteen-pounders mounted on slides; the ditch twelve feet deep and sixteen wide. A hut in the middle for a barrack for twenty men. They should be well supplied with hand grenades—fire-balls to fire the ditch when assailed." It was computation that would have pleased Dr. Johnson, but it failed to interest the authorities.

In December the *Venerable* was sent back to England with orders from Cornwallis that the men were to be "refreshed." Instead, they were almost worked to death as soon as the vessel berthed in Cawsand Bay. Some slight defects were first discovered in the ship and the more the *Venerable* was examined the worse they appeared to be until at last she was found to be so completely rotten as to be unfit for sea. For six months Collingwood and his crew had been sailing with only a sheet of copper between them and eternity. He moved his flag to the *Culloden*. The old *Venerable*, which had carried Duncan at Camperdown, was near the end of her days. During a gale in the following November, on a wild night, the *Venerable* lying at anchor in Torbay, was blown ashore with some loss of life.

He had returned to the blockade of Brest when in April, 1804, he was promoted Vice-Admiral of the Blue. Even this did not put him in better mood for blockading, which meant "a deprivation of everything that is pleasurable. I have had a good share of it and whenever we are blessed with peace I shall go ashore with extreme satisfaction never to embark again." It was too late. He had had his chance and thrown it away. It would not come to him a second time. Never again would he enjoy the green of the year. His trees would bud and leaf without his knowing. Their autumn glory would never more bring him pleasure.

Crocuses would push their little flames through the cold earth and make way for primroses and daffodils, honeysuckle, wild rose and eglantine, violets and gillyflowers, but he had sacrificed his right to them. He had given up his title to watch the restless troutlings in his native burns, the drunken bees and Emperor butterflies swaying over seas of sweet-scented heather. Useless now to think of curlew and cuckoo, of the horses in his stables, and the peace and rest and beauty, the friendship and the love of those at home.

Roddam, Matheson, Carlyle, Blackett, Sarah, and the girls he would never see again. He had sacrificed all this and more for the Service, for England, for a peace of mind he could not otherwise have had. And for that he must support a life of boredom and discomfort. He had condemned himself to watching summer and winter go by in a miserable repetition of all that he most hated. His life had become intolerably dull.

His mental appetite was insatiable. Cooped up for month after month within the narrow bounds of the sort of cockle shells that fought at Trafalgar, denied the stimulus of the impact of other minds and different experience upon his own, it is little wonder that he sometimes betrayed himself stupidly and revealed the constricted limits of his imagination. Yet his constant need of a bone for his mind to gnaw is creditable

in itself. Those bones were many and various. His plan for coastal defence was one. His scheme for a ship's band another. The correspondence course of education he gave his daughters, a third. Now his mind struggled with the problem of ensuring the future supply of oaks for the building of men-of-war.

"If the country gentlemen do not make a point to plant oaks wherever they will grow," he wrote to Blackett in February, 1805, "the time will not be very distant when, to keep our navy, we must depend entirely on captures from the enemy. You will be surprised to hear that most of the 'knees' that were used in *Hibernia* were taken from the Spanish ships captured on February 14: what they could not furnish was supplied by iron. I wish that everybody thought on this subject as I do; they would not walk through their farms without a pocketful of acorns to drop in the hedgesides and then let them take their chance."

He was really anxious about the planting of oak trees in the country. England would never cease to be a great nation while she had ships, but these she could not have without timber. Trees were not being planted because people could not play at cards the year after with the proceeds of it. At home he planted an oak wherever he had a place to put it and at sea he boasted that he "had some very nice plantations coming on." He had established a nursery in his garden from which he gave trees to anyone who would plant them, and even gave instructions how to top them and make them spread to knee timber. He did not do things by half.

The scarcity of oak was rapidly becoming acute. "It was computed," states Clark Russell, "that the construction of a 74-gun ship consumed about 3000 loads of timber each containing 50 cubic feet. Two thousand large well-grown trees, averaging two tons each, were needed. Allowing a space of 33 feet between each tree—30 feet being the usual planting distance—then a statute acre would contain forty

trees ; and the building of a 74-gun ship therefore absorbed the timber of 50 acres. Even so recently as 1844—thirty-four years after the death of Collingwood—a writer was declaring that ‘the man who plants 500 acres of land with 20,000 oak trees, which in 90 or 100 years will be available in the construction of ten sail of the line, is a true patriot, whilst by such an act his posterity will reap an ample fortune.’ ”

## PRELUDE TO BATTLE

**T**HAT year, 1805, he was set free from the working out of such schemes, which are occupations for only those who are time-weary. Henceforward it was thrust and parry, parry and thrust at lightning speed, and Collingwood had need to think of nothing but the business in hand. On January 1, 1805, he was blockading Missiessy in Rochefort; Cornwallis had Ganteaume shut up in Brest; and Nelson lay in wait for Villeneuve outside Toulon. Napoleon now ordered Villeneuve and Missiessy to join each other at Martinique, sail from there to the West Indies, ravage the English islands, and strengthen those of France. They were then to hasten back to Rochefort. The Grand Army, it was hoped, would go on board immediately they arrived and leave at once for the invasion of England.

Missiessy broke the blockade on January 11, Villeneuve on the 18th, but only Missiessy reached Martinique. There he waited for forty days in accordance with the orders he had received. Then, resignedly, he returned to Europe.

Villeneuve had left Toulon with eleven ships of the line and nine frigates. His fleet carried about 7000 troops with guns and cavalry saddles, but he had left his attempt too late. Gales ravaged the ships. Within two days Villeneuve was back in Toulon. "I declare to you," he wrote to Decres, the Minister of Marine, "that ships of the line thus equipped, short-handed, encumbered with troops, with superannuated or bad materials, vessels which lose their masts or sails at

every puff of wind, and which in fine weather are constantly engaged in repairing the damages caused by the wind, or the inexperience of their sailors, are not fit to undertake anything. I had a presentiment of this before I sailed ; I have now only too painfully experienced it."

But, by accident, he had started a phantom hare after which Nelson went chasing. He looked for the French in Sardinia, Naples, Sicily, and Alexandria before he ceased hunting. It was March 13 before he was back outside Toulon to find Villeneuve at his old moorings. And Napoleon, in the meantime, had ready another plan.

Missiessy, with his five sail of the line, was still at Martinique. Villeneuve, with seven ships from Cadiz and his own fleet at Toulon, was to join him there. Ganteaume was to break out of Brest, join with the squadron at Ferrol, and make haste to Martinique to take the command of the combined fleet. Then the combined fleet was to return to Europe, defeat the Channel Fleet, and be back at Boulogne between June 10 and July 10. His fleet, Napoleon reckoned, would then comprise between forty and fifty-three sail of the line. Gantcaume's attempt to break out of Brest failed, but Villeneuve left Toulon on March 30, eluded Nelson at the Balearic Islands, drove off the ships blockading Cadiz, and after joining with the squadron, sailed for Martinique, which he reached on May 13. Nelson was in pursuit all the way. Villeneuve found that Missiessy had sailed and Ganteaume never came. He left for Europe and Nelson followed close behind.

Collingwood did not receive his orders to join Nelson in the chase until May. Much was left to his discretion. He chose the *Dreadnought* to carry his flag and two other sail of the line to accompany him. On July 18 the look-out saw a crowd of sail approaching. The English vessels sheered off and proceeded with the utmost caution. Were they French ships or English ? They were Nelson's, and he wrote to

Collingwood of his misery at his failure to bring Villeneuve to battle. He thought he had been tricked and that the French had gone to Jamaica. He promised to visit his old messmate as soon as the fleet was watered at Gibraltar—"not, my dear friend," he declared, "to take your command from you (for I may probably add mine to you), but to consult how we can best serve our country by detaching a part of this large force."

Collingwood's mind had been active. He had watched all the moves and guessed what Napoleon intended. In answer to Nelson's letter he dashed off one of his own explaining the riddle. He might have read the secret orders in Villeneuve's bureau so clearly did he see into Napoleon's mind. "I have always had an idea that Ireland alone was the object they have in view and still believe that to be their ultimate destination," he wrote.

"They will now liberate the Ferrol squadron from Calder, make the round of the bay, and taking the Rochefort people with them, appear off Ushant, perhaps with thirty-four sail there to be joined by twenty more.

"This appears a probable plan, for unless it be to bring their powerful fleets and armies to some great point of service—some rash attempt at conquest—they have been subjecting them to chance of loss, which I do not believe the Corsican would do without the hope of an adequate reward. The French Government never aim at little things when great objects are in view.

"I have considered the invasion of Ireland as the real mark and butt of all their operations. Their flight to the West Indies was to take off the naval force, which proved the great impediment to their undertaking.

"This summer is big with events; we may all perhaps have an active share in them."

The blockade was going well for England. Vast heterogeneous stores had been piled up at Ferrol, Rochefort,

and Brest, but the other centres to the south had been ignored. Now they were short of supplies. A month before he met Nelson, Collingwood had ordered Rear-Admiral Louis, in charge of the blockade at Cadiz and San Lucar, to prevent provision fleets from entering the ports of Ayamonte and Magnar, but to allow British merchants living in Spain to continue to import goods. Nelson approved. He thought to starve the enemy into fighting. He recalled the saying that hunger would break through stone walls ; the blockade was only a wall of wood. The French were trying to get provisions in Danish ships into all the little ports from Cape St. Mary's to Algeciras, from which they were conveyed in coasting boats to Cadiz. Collingwood stopped this by detaining all these boats and sending them to Gibraltar for attention by an Admiralty court. Nelson backed his plan.

"I am able," he told Lord Castlereagh, "to see the propriety and necessity of the measure without which the blockade of Cadiz is nugatory, and we should only have the odium of the measure without any benefit to us or real distress to our enemies. There never was a place so proper to be blockaded at this moment as Cadiz. I have therefore to request that your Lordship will take the proper measures that officers under my orders may not get into any pecuniary scrape by their obedience ; and should it be thought proper to allow the enemy's fleet to be victualled, that I may be informed as soon as possible."

By August, Collingwood was in great expectation that he would have a "rattling day" of it soon. The Spaniards were ready. They had embarked 4000 troops at Cadiz, where he waited, and many more at Cartagena. It was arranged that as soon as they put to sea he would be joined by Sir R. Bickerton. They would be outnumbered by two to one, but they must beat the enemy or else never go home. He fully intended that. The old fire-eater was in great glee. A dull superiority created languor. It was such a state as his at

that moment which roused his spirits and made him feel as if the welfare of all England depended on him alone. England should not be disappointed.

A few weeks later his squadron had thinned to four men-of-war with which to face a fleet four times as strong. When at last Villeneuve's combined fleet, consisting of twenty-nine ships of the line, appeared before Cadiz he had left only "three poor things, with a frigate and a bomb." It was then six o'clock in the morning and they were close to the lighthouse at Cadiz. Collingwood drew off towards the Straits of Gibraltar, "not very ambitious, as you may suppose," he told Sarah, "to try our strength against such odds."

Villeneuve sent sixteen large ships after him, and Collingwood tried hard to lure them through the Straits. He jogged along slowly, "as people do when they are sullen," he told his sister, for he "did not choose to show any alarm that might rouse their activity." The *Dreadnought* was a heavy sailer, but he kept her just out of gunshot. "They shall not drive me through the Straits unless they come after me," he declared. But the enemy were wily. They saw his trap when he shortened sail and tacked. He promptly shifted his helm. Again and again this happened until the enemy grew tired and returned to Cadiz. With indomitable courage Collingwood went back after them and resumed the blockade. Not half the French men-of-war were in port before he was at their tail.

Next day he looked into Cadiz and saw that the fleet was now "as thick as a wood." While he waited for reinforcements he tried to conceal his puny strength by stationing one ship close in with instructions to make signals occasionally as though a fleet was in the distance. At any moment Villeneuve might have come out and pounded him to pieces, but the man of granite would not move. "This is a comfortless station," he truthfully informed Sarah when the danger was greatest. "It is difficult to procure refreshment except the grapes

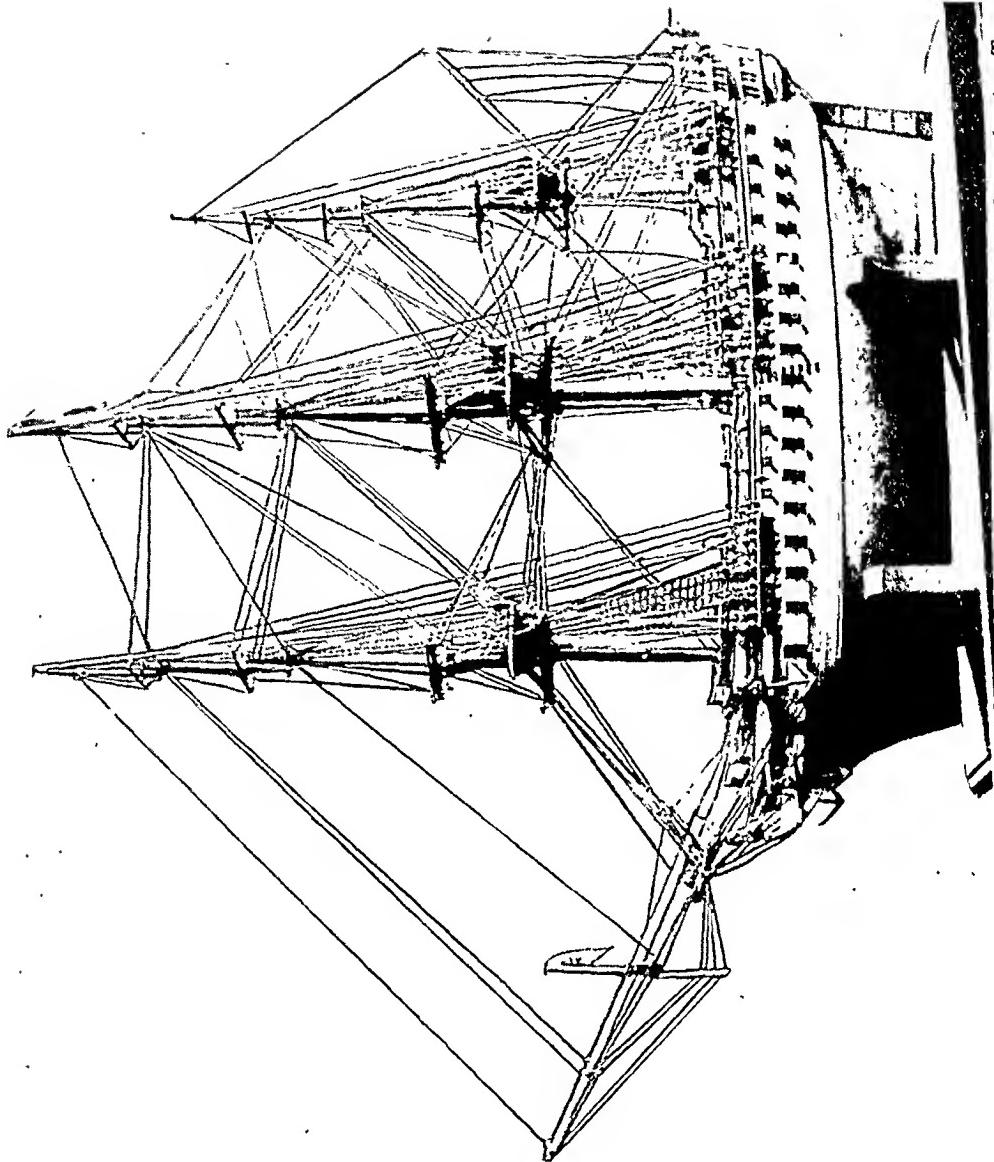
which the Portuguese bring us." He begged her to tell him all she could think of about his family and "the beauties of your domain—the oaks, the woodlands, and the verdant meads."

Bickerton and Calder came up in a day or two with reinforcements and the blockade was resumed more closely than ever. Napoleon had made no provision for feeding so huge a fleet as that in Cadiz. The enemy's fighting spirit rose as their bellies emptied.

Nelson was now on his way. From the Admiralty on September 7 he wrote to Collingwood to expect him in a few days. The Vice-Admiral was to remain second-in-command, changing the *Dreadnought* for the *Royal Sovereign*, a vessel of 100 guns. On the 25th, in a letter from the *Victory*, he asked that no salute should be fired on his arrival nor colours flown, "for it is as well," he said, "not to proclaim to the enemy every ship which may join the fleet."

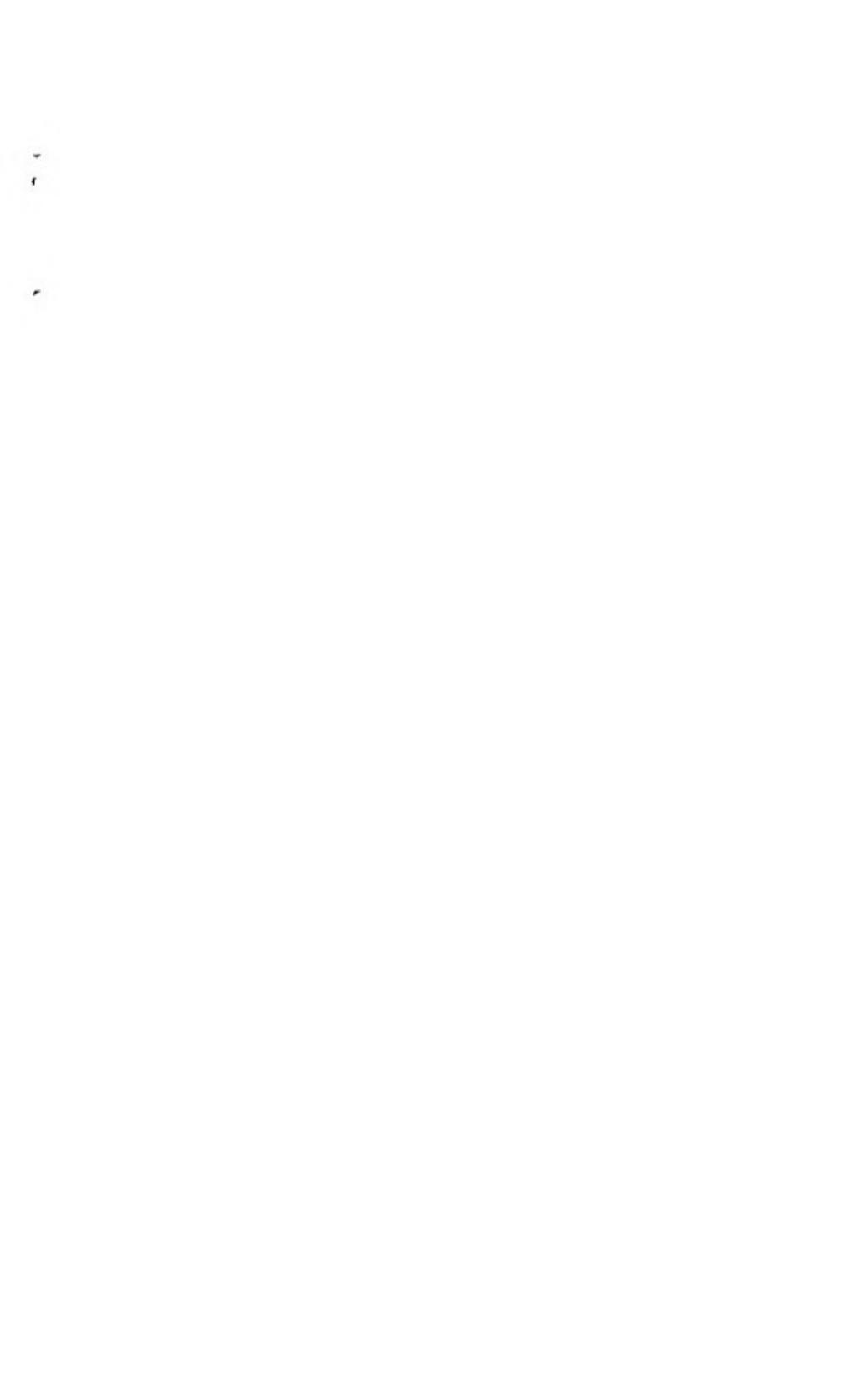
Yet somehow it seemed to Collingwood that the zest had gone out of life as September came to an end. There in the harbour was the combined fleet of France and Spain—thirty-four sail of the line—perfectly complete. He himself had enough ships to fight them whenever they chose to try their skill. But a multitude of minor worries were oppressing him. His great difficulty was to maintain the health of his men. This was something that required unremitting attention, but no one was disposed to take any trouble over it.

Good beef was available from the Moors, but ships were needed to fetch it and these he could not spare. The meat of more than two hundred bullocks was got through in a week and a transport laden with wine was consumed in a month. He was at his wit's end to know how to keep up the water supply. And in the midst of it all he had no companion save his dog, Bouncee. He was determined, if he could manage it, to go home next spring for the rest of his life, for he was very weary. There seemed no end to the work he had to do. From morning until night he was at it. . . .



By courtesy of Trinity House, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Model of the *Royal Sovereign*.



The days were spent in artillery practice and in painting the men-of-war. Everyone was following Nelson's practice of painting his ships with two broad bands of yellow with the portholes painted black. There were theatrical performances each night in almost every ship. These finished at 7.45 with the singing of "God Save the King." Then those who could went to bed. There was an odd combination of tension and gaiety to be noticed in the conduct of the English fleet.

Nelson arrived on September 28 and the Vice-Admiral was at once stimulated. He was complimented on his conduct of the blockade and told to telegraph upon all occasions without ceremony, for, said Nelson, "we are one and, I hope, ever shall be." His enthusiasm gushed up and he hastened to pour out his own ideas about the situation.

"If the enemy are to sail with an easterly wind," he declared, "they are not bound to the Mediterranean, and your lordship may depend upon it the Cartagena squadron is intended to join them. If they effect that, and with a strong easterly wind they may, they will present themselves to us with forty sail. Should Louis by any good fortune fall in with the Cartagena squadron, I am sure he would turn them to leeward, for they would expect the whole fleet after them."

There was a rapid exchange of letters between the two friends. On the same day Nelson wrote to Collingwood that "with this swell I think we had better at 4.30 or 5 make the signal for all boats to repair on board and to keep the wind under three topsails and foresail for the night and direct the ships with transports in tow to keep to windward: this clear night we need not mind the order of sailing, even if we want to wear in the night. Should the swell get up before the evening telegraph me without ceremony and the boats shall be hoisted and we will make sail."

Collingwood's position was a curious one. Nelson with his genius for knowing how to get the best out of a man implied by his attitude to his friend that theirs was a joint

command. Yet every now and then the steel could be felt through the velvet. Nelson had pride but he was not vain. He was not above running errands for his friends. Twice at least he wrote to Sarah even before he had met her, offering to carry for her any letters or parcels she might wish to send out to Collingwood. At times when they had run across each other there had been an interchange of presents—baskets of vegetables, for example. They had dined and talked together as chance offered. The friendship that had been formed in the West Indies suppressing American smuggling was undimmed.

Collingwood was the man to chase the French, of that there were not two opinions, Nelson thought. He would plan and scheme and keep the ring. Collingwood should have the brunt of the fighting. He saw how his friend differed from him and how he could best use him. He had not come out to take his command from him but to add his to Collingwood's. He had told Sir Richard Keats of the old *Superb* at Merton on one of those few days in England what he proposed to do.

"No day can be long," he had said as they walked together in the garden, "to arrange a couple of fleets and fight a decisive battle, according to the old system. When we meet them, for meet them we shall, I'll tell you how I shall fight them. I shall form the fleet into three divisions in three lines. One division shall be composed of twelve or fourteen of the fastest two-decked ships, which I shall keep always to windward, or in a situation of advantage, and I shall put them under an officer who, I am sure, will employ them in the manner I wish if possible. I consider it will always be in my power to throw them into battle in any part I may choose, but if circumstances prevent their being carried against the enemy where I desire, I shall feel certain he will employ them effectually, and perhaps in a more advantageous manner than if he could have followed my orders. With the remaining part of the fleet formed into two lines, I shall go at them at

once, if I can, about one-third of their line from their leading ship. . . . What do you think of it?—I'll tell you what *I* think of it, I think it will surprise and confound the enemy. They won't know what I am about. It will bring forward a pell-mell battle, and that is what I want."

Nelson never told Keats to whom he would entrust the command of that line of fast-sailing two-deckers intended to bring on that pell-mell battle, but even then he had decided there was only one man for it—the man who had hung on to Villeneuve's tail with his four poor craft outside Cadiz, the man who had been a friend indeed to him at St. Vincent—Collingwood.

The breeze was sufficiently strong on October 8 for Captain Blackwood's squadron, stationed at the mouth of Cadiz Harbour, to reconnoitre the enemy's force. He found it consisted of thirty-four sail of the line, three of which were triple-decked ships, five frigates, one corvette, and three brigs. Six admirals had their flags flying. All the French vessels had their top-gallant yards up and sails bent. Obviously they would sail at any hour. Next day Nelson sent Collingwood his plan of attack. There was, of course, no certainty of what position the enemy would be found in, but the plan was sent so that his "dear friend" might be perfectly at ease respecting his intentions and to give full scope to his judgment in carrying them into effect.

"We can, my dear Coll, have no little jealousies," Nelson wrote in his covering letter. "We have only one great object in view—that of annihilating our enemies and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you; and no man will render you service with more justice than your very kind friend, Nelson and Bronte."

Collingwood, with knit brows and intent face, skimmed through Nelson's plan.

"Thinking it almost impossible," he read, "to bring a

fleet of forty sail of the line into a line of battle, in variable winds, thick weather, and other circumstances which must occur, without such a waste of time that the opportunity would probably be lost of bringing the enemy into battle in such a manner as to make the business : I have therefore made up my mind to keep the fleet in that position of sailing with the exception of the first and second command that the order of sailing is to be the order of battle : placing the fleet in two lines of sixteen ships each, with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-decked ships, which will make, if wanted, a line of twenty-four sail on whichever line the commander-in-chief may direct. The second-in-command will, after my intentions are made known to him, have the entire direction of his line to make the attack upon the enemy and to follow up the blow until they are captured or destroyed.

" If the enemy's fleet shall be seen to windward in line of battle, and that the two lines and advanced squadron could fetch them, they will probably be so extended that their van could not succour their rear. I should probably therefore make the second-in-command's signal to lead through about their twelfth ship from the rear or wherever he could fetch if not able to get so far advanced. My line would lead through about their centre ; and the advanced squadron to lead two or three or four ships ahead of their centre so as to ensure getting at their commander-in-chief, whom every effort should be made to capture.

" The whole impression of the British fleet must be to overpower from two or three ships ahead of their commander-in-chief supposed to be in the centre to the rear of their fleet. I will suppose twenty sail of the enemy's line to be untouched ; it must be some time before they could perform a manœuvre to bring their force compact to attack any part of the British fleet or to succour their own fleet, which, indeed, would be impossible without mixing with the ships engaged. The enemy's fleet is supposed to be forty-six sail of the line ;

British fleet of forty. If either be less only a proportionate number of enemy's ships are to be cut off: British to be one-fourth superior to the enemy cut off.

"Something must be left to chance: nothing is sure in a sea fight beyond all others. Shot will carry away the masts and yards of friends as well as foes. But I look with confidence to a victory before the van of the enemy could succour their rear; and then that the British fleet would most of them be ready to receive their sail of the line or to pursue them should they endeavour to make off. If the van of the enemy tacks, the captured ships must be run to leeward of the British fleet; if the enemy wears, the British must place themselves between the enemy and the captured and disabled British ships; and should the enemy close, I have no fears as to the result.

"The second-in-command will, in all possible things, direct the movements of his line by keeping them as compact as the nature of circumstances will admit. Captains are to look to their particular line as their rallying points, but in case signals can neither be seen nor perfectly understood, no captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy.

"The divisions of the British fleet will be brought nearly within gunshot of the enemy's centre: the signal would most probably then be made for the lee line to bear up together, to set all their sails, even steering sails, in order to get as quickly as possible to the enemy's line, and to cut through, beginning at the twelfth ship from the enemy's rear. Some ships may not get through at their exact place, but they would always be at hand to assist their friends; and if any are thrown round the rear of the enemy, they would effectually complete the business of twelve sail of the enemy.

"Should the enemy wear together, or bear up and sail large, still the twelve ships, composing in the first position the enemy's rear, are to be the object of attack of the lee side, unless otherwise directed from the commander-in-chief,

which is scarcely to be expected, as the entire management of the lee line, after the intentions of the commander-in-chief are satisfied, is intended to be left to the judgment of the admiral commanding that line.

"The remainder of the enemy's fleet, thirty-four sail, are to be left to the management of the commander-in-chief, who will endeavour to take care that the movements of the second-in-command are as little interrupted as is possible."

The last page was turned. The ghost of a smile lit Collingwood's thin features. The plan was simple. It was profound. He gave it his full approval and support. Had he not always said that it was a positive disadvantage, both in loss of time and application of power, for a large number of ships to act in one line? And starting from his chair, he paced his cabin floor, turning the plan over in his mind. A force one-quarter greater than the ships to be attacked was to be flung at the enemy's rear. The van was to be threatened and prevented from helping the outnumbered rear, and by breaking the enemy's line in two places, the foremost ships would be shorn from it to leeward and unable, for some time at least, to give assistance to the rest of their fleet.

He, Collingwood, the second-in-command, was to head the leeward line. If the enemy was found to windward he was to lead through their force about the twelfth ship from their rear. In all possible things he was to direct the movement of his line by keeping them as compact as the day's events would let him. But if the enemy's fleet was discovered drawn up in line of battle to windward, his line was to bear up (that is, sail in line abreast), with all sails set, to cut through the enemy as quickly as possible at the twelfth ship from the rear. The direction of his line was to be left to Collingwood. He was flattered and delighted. From now on, he liked to think that Nelson did nothing without his advice.

He changed into the *Royal Sovereign* and flung himself into the task of licking the crew into shape. Each day there

was artillery practice. He had brought the gunnery of the *Dreadnought* to such a pitch that few ships' companies could equal them in rapidity and precision of firing. The standard he set was three well-directed broadsides within five minutes. Dint of practice enabled them to fire three broadsides in three minutes and a half. Time was short, but he did what he could to make the *Royal Sovereign* as good as the *Dreadnought*.

Each day brought a note from Nelson to warm him and keep him eager. The little man had a rare abundance of tact, but the prickly Collingwood purred like a cat under his skilful stroking. "The enemy's fleet are all but out of the harbour," Nelson informed him on the 10th. "Perhaps this night, with the northerly wind, they may come forth. The Admiralty could not do less than call your conduct judicious. Everybody in England admired your adroitness in not being forced unnecessarily into the Straits."

There was a dispute over the transference of Dr. Felix, the surgeon, from the *Dreadnought* to the *Royal Sovereign* and some trouble concerning the provisioning of the fleet with bread and wine. Both men had a passion for the detail of their work. Nelson ordered Collingwood not to "load the ships with more wine than they can stow; let it stay in the transport." The *Donegal*, the second-in-command was told by Nelson, had not one billet of wood. "If you arrange the disposition of it, I wish *Donegal* to be ordered 10, 15, or 20 chords as the wants of other ships will allow." And again: "The Master of the *Lord Duncan* has brought his invoice, which I send you. There is also 392,000 lbs. of bread at Gibraltar. The bread dispose of, and whatever else is wanted in your line from this ship (*Victory*). I have not got the account of what is embarked in the *Shield* except some stores from the *Canopus* and ships in your line. To-morrow will be fine. *Malabar*'s bread, of course, take out of her and the other good things."

Collingwood wrote to Nelson on the 9th that he had "

just sense of your lordship's kindness to me and the full confidence you have reposed in me inspire me with the most lively gratitude. I hope it will not be long before there is an opportunity of showing that it has not been misplaced."

On the 14th Nelson wrote : " Perhaps as the weather is fine, and the business of the transports closed, you will come on board this forenoon that I may tell you all I know and all my intentions."

And it was to Collingwood that Nelson sent his last letter, except those to Emma and the child, Horatia.

" It was the Rochefort squadron that took the *Calcutta*," Nelson wrote on October 19 in the gossipy vein of one service man to another. " Yesterday, by the *Guernseyman*, we had the French officer on board. He belonged to the *Magnanimous*, and says that they should have taken the *Agamemnon* in the night, but they fancied the Oporto and Lisbon squadrons were ships of war. The first-rate sails faster than any of them ; five sail of the line, three frigates, and two brigs. Sir Richard has five sail ; but I think he will have enough on his hands, and from my soul I wish him well over it.

" What a beautiful day ! Will you be tempted out of your ship ? If you will, hoist the Assent and *Victory*'s pendants.

" I had a letter from Sir John Saumarez yesterday, of October 1. He sent me some papers ; I take it very kind of him.

Ever, my dear Coll,  
Yours most faithfully,  
NELSON AND BRONTE."

Two days later Collingwood, with tears trickling down his cheeks, thus endorsed it : " Before the answer to this letter had got to the *Victory*, the signal was made that the enemy's fleet was coming out of Cadiz, and we chased immediately."

At three o'clock that afternoon the *Colossus* signalled that the combined fleet was at sea. Next day, Sunday, October 20,

there were fresh breezes from the south-south-west and some rain. The frigates reported that nine enemy sail were outside the harbour. By 5 p.m. there was news that thirty-one enemy craft were to the north-north-west. At dawn on the 21st a flock of French and Spanish sails whitened the horizon to leeward. The rising sun dispersed a thin mist. The wind was only light but a swell was rolling in from the Atlantic. Slowly as the morning progressed, the distance between the two magnificent armadas shortened.

"QUOTH LITTLE PETERKIN"

**W**HY was Collingwood fighting? Was it the threat of invasion that had led him twice in these last years to renounce his house, his garden, Sarah, and the children? Perhaps, but the more he considered that menace the more it dwindled and lost force. If any part of Great Britain was to be invaded, he reasoned, it would be Ireland, and that was hardly England. Even now, before the naval issue had been settled by this day's work, the focal point of danger was shifting once more to the Continent. Europe was again on the boil. Austria had invaded Bavaria. The Russians were in Germany. Prussia, it was thought, was on the brink of joining the coalition. Even should Napoleon's scheme bear fruit at Trafalgar, he would have more than enough to do in Central Europe without bothering to enlarge his battle front.

Collingwood's hatred of the French was something much more fundamental than a momentary fear of invasion. It was a deep-rooted antipathy as natural to an Englishman as is a dog's fear of strangers. Often this feeling was inarticulate, as in the case of Goldsmith's wooden-legged sailor, who hated the French because they were all slaves and wore wooden shoes. An Englishman, willy-nilly, has to hate everyone who has not the good sense to live in his own country. Dr. Johnson, Boswell records, was "willing to love all mankind, except an American," and his inflammable corruption, bursting forth into fire, he "breathed out threatenings and

slaughter,” calling them “rascals, robbers, pirates,” and exclaiming he’d “burn and destroy them.” When Johnson went on his continental tour, he found that “the French are a gross, ill-bred, untaught people: a lady there will spit on the floor and rub it with her foot. What I gained by being in France was learning to be satisfied with my own country.”

Nelson, who most sincerely wished to drive the French to the devil, was convinced that the invasion of England was intended. “Some day or other that Buonaparte will attempt the invasion and conquest of Great Britain,” he declared early in October. That was why the combined fleet must be annihilated—not “merely a splendid victory of 23 to 36—honourable to the parties concerned, but absolutely useless, in the extended scale, to bring Buonaparte to his marrow-bones.” For the same reason he had strived to encourage starved Italians “to cut the throats of the French crew—what an idea for a Christian !”

Collingwood could not laugh in this way at his intense loathing of the Gallic race. He trained himself not to believe a Frenchman, “especially when he speaks humbly of his own powers or ability.” He had arranged for his children to be taught French and this sometimes worried him. It savoured of playing with fire. He was careful to impress on his daughters that there was little else from France which he wished them to love or imitate. He needed a Frenchman, an individual, at whom to spit his venom. Napoleon was that man. Buonaparte’s rule was “repugnant to the interests and welfare of the people.” He consoled himself with the thought that whenever Napoleon’s tide of greatness was at the flood, his ebb would be more rapid than his rise. To bring his dictatorship to an end was the only way to ensure peace, but he did not delude himself that this was a war to end war. Ease and Wealth would make men “licentious and insolent and then our grandchildren may begin the battle again.”

After Trafalgar, when the old watch-dog came to know

Villeneuve, he wavered momentarily. The French Admiral, he found, was "a well-bred man," who had nothing in his manners of the offensive vapouring and boasting which we, perhaps too often, attribute to Frenchmen." He soon regained his stride. When Mohammed Pasha of Algiers sent his congratulations on the victory of Trafalgar, Collingwood hastened to point the moral. "I thank you," he replied, "for rejoicing in our success over the French and Spanish. We have defeated them and destroyed their fleet. Thank God for it. They are the enemies of all men; for, not contented with their own country, they would carry their arms into all countries and overturn all Governments. The English fleet alone keep them within bounds or their ambition and love of dominion over all nations might take them to Algiers as before it carried them to Egypt."

At dawn on the morning of October 21, 1805, no doubts distracted his mind. He was engaged in a holy war. Like all Puritans he saw himself as the servant of God. The way of England and the Navy was the way of righteousness.

## TRAFalGAR

THE rising sun was making a bright blur behind the massed ships of France and Spain, when Smith, Collingwood's servant, entered the Vice-Admiral's cabin. He was surprised to find that the second-in-command was up and shaving.

"Have you seen the French fleet, Smith?" he asked crisply.

"No, sir," the man replied.

There was a look of astonishment on Collingwood's lathered face.

"Then look at them," he cried, "for in a very short time we shall see a good deal more of them."

Smith went to the porthole and saw a crowd of ships to leeward, but he was much more interested in his master, who went on shaving with a composure that astonished him.

Both Collingwood and Nelson dressed that morning with the greatest care. The commander put on his most resplendent uniform on which shone all his orders, including the great star of the Order of the Bath. In honour he had gained them and in honour he would die with them, he had said. His friend thought in the same way. He put on full dress, silk stockings, tights, gold epaulets, and a little triangular gold-laced cocked hat, took out his medals—those dear, dear trophies—gave them a rub, and carefully hung them in place. Their opponent, Villeneuve, commander-in-chief of the combined fleet, who was "a tallish, thin man, a very placid,

tranquil, English-looking Frenchman," was dressing with equal care. He put on a long-tailed, uniform coat, high and flat collar, corduroy pantaloons of a greenish colour with stripes two inches wide, half boots with sharp toes, and a watch chain with long gold links. Trafalgar was above all things to be a ceremonial occasion.

The first man Collingwood met when he went on deck was Clavell, who had turned himself out smartly, but was wearing boots instead of silk stockings. That, in the eyes of the Vice-Admiral, was the act of a fool.

" You had better put on silk stockings as I have done," he told the Lieutenant. " If you are shot in the leg, then it will be much more manageable for the surgeon."

The ship's company was mustered for him on deck and he addressed them vigorously. Then he turned to the officers. " Now, gentlemen," he said, " let us do something to-day which the world may talk of hereafter."

The enemy were only three miles away when Collingwood had the crew piped to breakfast.

" Every British heart pants for glory," Aikenhead, a midshipman in the *Royal Sovereign*, wrote home. " Our old Admiral is quite young with the thoughts of it."

The fleet was arranged in two columns. The enemy were only thirty-three strong instead of forty as Nelson had anticipated. He accordingly gave up his plan for a third line. Collingwood had fifteen ships and Nelson twelve, but the second-in-command, steering for the van of the rear, was faced with greater gun-power than Nelson who was making for the rear of the enemy's van.

The formation of the two columns was that of the line ahead. Six of the fastest ships had been given to Collingwood, for his job was to get into action as quickly as possible. At a quarter to nine Collingwood, remembering he was to have entire control of his line so long as he got into battle at the earliest possible moment, made two signals to his line in



*By courtesy of Mr. E. F. Collingwood*

The Battle of Trafalgar.  
A painting by J. W. Carmichael.



rapid succession. The first was to "form the larboard line of bearing, steering the course indicated," and the second was to "make more sail, the leading ship first up in line of battle or order of sailing."

The effect of these signals ought to have brought the lee line ships abreast of each other, but this depended on Collingwood's shortening sail and going into action at the pace of his slowest vessel. This he would not do. Most of his ships were the starboard of his wake. He went ahead, determined to beat Nelson for the honour of opening the fight he abandoned his instructions for his followers to come up in line of bearing for a bow and quarter line. Even this was not successful and the lee ships went into battle on a line of bearing only one point from the line ahead formation. Precious time had been saved. A great example was set the fleet. But the second-in-command by his persistence took his fate in his hands.

Nelson hoisted signal after signal. The first was for the fleet to form order of sailing in two columns. Then came the command to prepare for battle. Next the fleet was ordered to bear up in succession on the course he steered. At eleven o'clock, the English being still two miles from the enemy, he had one more instruction for Collingwood: the fleet must push through the opposing line to prevent the enemy from getting into Cadiz. Then came his last message. As it was being run up on the *Victory* Collingwood turned away petulantly.

"I wish Nelson would stop signalling," he said. "We all know what we have to do." These constant last-minute instructions were to him a needless distraction. Nelson's last signal was read and brought to him: "England expects that every man will do his duty." The phrase struck a chord in his heart. He regretted his impatience and promptly made known the slogan to all on board the *Royal Sovereign*.

One final signal Nelson was to make a few minutes before

she began to fire. It was to prepare to anchor immediately after battle. These last instructions were to prove a rod in pickle for Collingwood's back.

In obedience to Nelson's battle instructions, issued to the flag officers and captains on October 9, the fleet had set all the usual sails, but there was scarcely enough wind to fill them. The *Royal Sovereign* was only a fortnight out from England. Her copper was clean and she was a fast sailer, but the west wind was so light that she made only about two sea miles an hour. Yet gradually she drew away from the fourteen men-of-war who followed her. The swell which rolled in from the Atlantic made her rock like a see-saw. Masts were clouded with white canvas and a profusion of ensigns, Union Jacks, flags, and pennants added colour to the pageant. The ships' bands played. The matches flamed in their tubs. Ports had been hauled up and the guns run out. Even the *Pickle* schooner had cleared for action, though her four black guns looked about as large and formidable as two pairs of Wellington boots. The gunners, their stripped bodies glistening in the sunshine, waited alert.

Collingwood went methodically through his ship seeing that all was in order. He even sighted a number of the guns himself. Then he went on to the poop deck and stood with his back to a mast munching an apple as the *Royal Sovereign* bore down majestically upon the enemy line, comprising eighteen French and fifteen Spanish men-of-war drawn up in crescent formation, with his old enemy, the three-decker *Santissima Trinidad*, towering in their midst.

Nelson, leading the other (weather) line about a mile away, was beside himself with eagerness to get ahead. He had been right when he told Collingwood that the *Royal Sovereign* was a better ship than the *Victory*. Now, as a last resort, he hoisted his studding sails in an effort to gather way. Clavell saw his move and begged to do the same. "No, no," Collingwood replied, looking at the long stretch of blue water

between the *Royal Sovereign* and the rest of the labouring fleet, "the ships of our line are not up enough yet, but you may get ready."

The studding sail and royal halliards were manned. Ten minutes later, as Clavell searched Collingwood's face, he saw the Vice-Admiral nod towards him. "Rig out and hoist away," Clavell cried. The white sails trembled, rose, and billowed. Away went the *Royal Sovereign*. Villeneuve on the *Bucentaure*, seeing the way in which she and the *Victory* came into action, would have thrown in his hand there and then. He turned to his officers. "Look how they are attacking," he cried. "We cannot prevent them. Nothing but victory can attend such gallant conduct."

Collingwood threw away the core of his apple. It was time to act. He ordered the men to lie down on the deck and keep quiet. The *Royal Sovereign* had both the enemy van and rear abaft her beam. Every alternate ship, the Vice-Admiral noticed, was about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern, forming a kind of double line, and appeared when on their beam, to leave a very small interval between them, yet without any overcrowding. Admiral Villeneuve in the eighty-gun *Bucentaure* was in the centre and the *Principe de Asturias* (112) bore the Spanish Admiral Gravina's flag in the rear, but the French and Spanish ships were mixed with no apparent regard to nationality.

Collingwood made his way to the gun-deck. A black man, one of his favourites, was allowed to fire ten shots in rapid succession. Their purpose was to screen the *Royal Sovereign* in smoke as she broke through the enemy's line. They were the first shots fired at Trafalgar. It was then shortly after midday.

Before the black, stinging smoke enveloped him, Collingwood had seen the *Fougueux*, a French seventy-four, astern of the *Santa Ana*, which he had marked as his first victim, closing up to bar his way. "Ram her, Rotherham," he ordered

his captain. "Let us carry away her bowsprit." The *Fougueux* took fright and at the last minute backed her main topsail. It required nice steerage to get through the enemy line. He did it by making a kind of S bend. The nearest ship supporting Collingwood, the *Belleisle*, was about a quarter of a mile behind. The enemy closed round him.

As he passed the stern of the black *Santa Ana*, a magnificent three-decker carrying 112 guns, he had the halliards of his studding-sails cut and let them drop into the water. Then his guns crashed out a double-shotted broadside. More than 350 Spaniards fell, either dead or wounded from that fusillade. It had been beautifully timed. Fourteen of the Spaniards' guns were put out of action. Her stern was torn down and she heeled perilously in the water. Somehow she contrived to right herself. Her business had seemed to be as good as finished, but she fought on fiercely for more than an hour and a half.

Four ships hastened to her rescue. The *Fougueux* bombarded the *Royal Sovereign* from astern. The *San Leandro*, a sixty-four, the *San Justo* (74 guns), and the *Indomptable* (80), let fly at the lone English vessel. It was in a position of extraordinary danger, but no fleet could have had a more rousing example. "See how that noble fellow, Collingwood, takes his ship into action," cried Nelson in delighted admiration. And Collingwood, as his vessel was pounded from all sides, murmured: "What would Nelson give to be here?"

The *Royal Sovereign*, with her helm hard a-starboard, ranged so close alongside the *Santa Ana* that the lower yards of the two ships became fast. Their guns were almost muzzle to muzzle. Often their shot met in mid-air and fell, flattened, into the water. Collingwood was so placed that his five foes found themselves smashing each other in their efforts to pound him out of existence. He might for all the world have been living in the heart of a volcano. It seemed a terribly long time before he found his friends about him. For fifteen

minutes he fought single-handed until Captain Harwood, in the *Belleisle*, came up with the *Fougueux*, fired a broadside into her, and then tore into the *Indomptable*. The *San Justo* also found herself engaged, for the lee line was now swarming into action. Collingwood was able to give all his attention to the crushing of the black giant.

Thirty minutes after exchanging the first shots all attempt at order had been abandoned. Collingwood's captains, remembering their battle instructions, placed their ships alongside the nearest of the enemy. They flung themselves, after the manner of their leader, impetuously into action. "Duff, worthy Duff," whose head an hour later was shot off by a cannon-ball, found difficulty in getting through, but managed to worm his ship, the *Mars*, next to the *Royal Sovereign*. The *Victory* had got on board the *Redoubtable*, the *Temeraire* had boarded the *Fougueux*, and many of the ships astern of the *Royal Sovereign* had boarded opposing Frenchmen. The "pell-mell action" was in full blast.

The Spanish Vice-Admiral, d'Alava, commanding the *Santa Ana*, determined to make a fight of it, ran all his guns to starboard and gave Collingwood back shot for shot. Red rents tore the black fabric of reeking smoke that smothered the two foes as the guns thundered. The *Royal Sovereign* rocked under the weight of metal that struck her. Her yards and halliards were riddled. A top-gallant studding-sail was shot away and fell over the gangway hammocks. "Here, Clavell," Collingwood cried, "help me take this in. We may want it again some other day." They carefully rolled it up and placed it in the boat. . . .

For more than an hour the two wooden ships mauled each other. Chalmers, one of Collingwood's officers, was struck by a cannon-ball and had his body well-nigh severed. The Vice-Admiral caught him as he fell. Chalmers' head lolled on Collingwood's shoulder. "I wish I could but live to read

of this fight in a newspaper," he panted. His last words were to bless the man who supported him.

Collingwood now ordered all the Marines to leave the poop, fearing that they were being dangerously exposed, but he himself remained there with his officers. They implored him to take off his epaulets and cocked hat, fearing that the Spanish sharpshooters would take them for a target to pick him off. "Let me alone," he replied. "I have always fought in a cocked hat and always shall."

A shower of musketry swept the poop and quarter-decks. It killed every man there except Collingwood, his secretary, Mr. Cosway, and his captain, Rotherham. The Vice-Admiral felt a hard blow in the back. He saw nothing and took it to be the wind of a shot that had missed him. Then a splinter of wood was sent flying and entered his leg. The blood gushed. It was a severe flesh wound, but all the notice he took of it was to take a handkerchief, bend down and bind it up. Then off he hobbled to cheer on his men.

He seemed to be the only calm man on board the *Royal Sovereign*. Meeting Smith, he asked him how he was and talked "of common matters as if nothing of any consequence was taking place." The servant could not see that in the emergency he had changed in any degree from his usual cool, dry manner and wondered "how any person whose mind was occupied by such a variety of most important concerns" could so remain at ease.

It was touch-and-go, but he pulled it off. To Collingwood it seemed that "the Almighty Disposer of all events" was working for him, but more detached observers have thought that the superiority of the English gunnery, which enabled them to fire five broadsides to the enemy's three, had a share in the result. At 2.30 p.m. the *Santa Ana* struck to the *Royal Sovereign*. Her three masts had gone over the side, which was smashed and beaten in. She had suffered hideously in loss of life. When her colours fell in a dejected tremble

Rotherham seized Collingwood by the hand. "I congratulate you, sir," he exclaimed.

The *Royal Sovereign* was nearly as badly damaged as her prize. Even as the seamen cheered the mizzen-mast crashed into the sea, and as they manœuvred to take charge of the *Santa Ana* the mainmast fell over the side. Only the fore-mast, tottering drunkenly, was left. Forty-seven officers and men had been killed and ninety-four wounded. Collingwood hailed Captain Blackwood of the *Euryalus* frigate to take the *Royal Sovereign* in tow and for the rest of the battle used the frigate for making his signals. Blackwood was sent to board the *Santa Ana*. The Spaniards told him that d'Alava was at the point of death and he allowed the wounded Admiral to remain on board. Guardoqui, the captain, went into the *Royal Sovereign* to surrender his sword. As he boarded his conqueror he asked what she was called. The name was given to him and he paused by one of the guns. Thoughtfully he patted it with his hand. "I think," he said, "she should be called the 'Royal Devil.' "

Blackwood, echoing Byng's remark concerning Temple West's behaviour at Minorca, declared that Collingwood had fought "like an angel." He could not decide whether the greater achievement lay with the *Victory* or the *Royal Sovereign*. "They both, in my opinion," he declared, "seemed to vie with each other in holding forth a brilliant example to the rest of the fleet. They were literally a host in themselves." Even Captain Codrington of the *Orion*, who could not stand Collingwood at any price, was moved to admit that he had gone into action "in the finest style possible and is as brave a man as ever stepped on board a ship."

Chaos covered the waters. Spars and rigging floated on the turgid sea. The air was acrid with the tang of burned powder. The great ships were heaped on top of each other in hopeless disorder. Their pride had left them. Frigates did what they could to tow the shattered hulks, victors and prizes

alike, to safety. Ships' boats had been lowered and were rowed to and fro saving ringleted seamen struggling for their lives in the water. Cannon-balls that had missed their mark fell among them with a hiss and a splash. It was Death's carnival and the climax had been reached.

Lieutenant Hills of the *Victory* arrived to inform Collingwood that Nelson was wounded. The Vice-Admiral went on to the quarter-deck. He saw that Dumanoir, the French Rear-Admiral, was leading a squadron of six ships towards the shattered *Victory*. The *Royal Sovereign* was almost a wreck, but once more her guns thundered. The *Minotaur* and *Spartiate* came up with a brisk fire. Dumanoir hesitated. The English fire was too hot for his liking and he retreated to the south-west. Gravina, the Spanish commander, with a wound from which he was never to recover, hoisted the signal of recall. His ship had already been towed out of action. Five French and five Spanish ships followed him back to Cadiz. Trafalgar was over. Villeneuve and the Spanish Rear-Admiral Cisneros were prisoners. Another French Admiral, Magon, was dead. The enemy had lost in killed, captured, and wounded more than 14,000 men. "There never was such a conflict since England had a fleet," Collingwood thought. "In three hours we have annihilated the combined forces of the enemy upon their own shores, at the entrance of their port, amongst their own rocks."

In the cockpit of the *Victory* Nelson was dying. "The enemy have struck," Hardy announced. "God be praised," the Admiral whispered. "Bring the fleet to anchor, Hardy."

"Collingwood is in command now," Hardy said diffidently.

"Not whilst I live, I hope, Hardy," the dying man retorted, his spirit flickering for a moment. He tried in vain to raise himself and, falling back exhausted, murmured: "Do you bring the fleet to anchor?"

From the quarter-deck of the *Royal Sovereign* Collingwood saw an unforgettable spectacle. The setting sun reddened

*By courtesy of Mr. E. F. Collingwood*

After Trafalgar. French ships being broken on the shoals.

A painting by J. W. Carmichael.





black rags of clouds. Twenty prizes were clustered round the *Victory* and his own broken vessel. Those of the enemy who had escaped capture were flying in opposite directions. The *Achille* was laced in flame and smoke. A vast quantity of wreckage was strewn over the sea. Almost every ship in sight had lost one mast at least. All were down on the *Belle-isle*, but a stump had been found on which to nail a Union Jack. Sails were slashed to ribbons and a fierce wind whistled ghoulishly through the vents. That wind was to block with sand the doors of fishermen's cottages along the Wessex coast and drive Collingwood into the destruction of the prizes.

The brightly painted men-of-war that had sailed that morning so proudly into action were now hulks, blackened, burned, and smashed. Their decks were slippery with blood. From the cockpits, where the wounded lay, came the screams and groans of men whose agony is uncontrollable. Collingwood asked how his crew had fared. The record of the *Royal Sovereign*'s losses was brought to him. All the northern boys and Graydon were alive, but Kennicott had a dangerous wound in his shoulder. Clavell, too, was wounded. Thompson had been shot in the arm and his leg was broken. Little Charles was unhurt, but many of the midshipmen were dead or wounded. The glory had been dearly bought.

Suddenly he was deafened by a great explosion. The French *Achille* had blown up. Then Hardy came on board and told him that Nelson was dead. His long, dear friendship was over. "A brotherhood of more than thirty years" was broken. He was left alone. The tears trickled down his haggard face. His seamen shared his sorrow. They had paid pretty sharply for licking the enemy. Those who had seen Nelson behaved like "such soft toads." They could only blast their eyes and cry when they heard Hardy's news. And chaps that had fought like the devil sat down and cried like a wench.

Collingwood was disconsolate. What could he do? A

gesture was necessary. He would order "a day of humiliation before God" for all the fleet, a day of thanksgiving to God for his merciful goodness, a day in which to implore forgiveness of sins, and pray for his constant aid for the fleet in its defence of England's laws and liberties. . . .

The light faded, and the Puritan, turning from the scene of naval glory and tragic desolation, stole down the companion-way to his cabin.

## CUP AND LIP

THE wind strengthened to a gale. The sea broke into foam and tossed about like an angry lion. There were only thirteen fathoms of water under the English fleet and its prizes. To leeward were the Trafalgar shoals. Collingwood had, after some delay, obeyed Nelson's instructions and made the signal to anchor. The *Defence* did so and was able to survive the storm with her prize, the *San Ildefonso*, on which jury rigging was run up. The *Phoebe* and the *Donegal* were able, after extraordinary exertions, to bring out the French *Swiftsure* and the *Bahama*. But the other ships had either not anchors to let go, or else the cables had been shot away. It was impossible to anchor the *Victory*.

Captain Hardy and Bunce, the carpenter, on examining the vessel found that the starboard cat-head had been shot away, the starboard, bow, and spare anchors were broken, and the stock of the sheet anchor damaged by shot. The *Algeciras* had only her two bow anchors left and one of these was broken in the shaft and the stock of the other shot away. Many of the others—the *Belleisle*, for instance, and a number of the prizes—had not a stick upon which to spread a yard of canvas. Nearer and nearer they rolled towards the threatening shoals.

At midnight the wind shifted and blew with redoubled force from the south-south-west. Collingwood signalled to the fleet to wear their heads to the westward. Four dismasted prizes were left anchored off Trafalgar while the fleet

slowly drifted out to sea. It was the best that could be done in the emergency.

The storm was so violent that the starboard quarter galley of the *Royal Sovereign* was smashed in and Clavell, lying wounded and unconscious in his bunk, was washed into the ward-room where, for a time, he was in danger of being drowned. Sixteen men of the *Tonnant* had had limbs amputated by the surgeons. The pitching of their ship tore open their wounds and only two lived through the ordeal. The *Leviathan* was another which had a terrible time. Her masts were damaged and the crew had suffered severely in the battle. Bayntoun, the captain, anchored and saved one of the prizes from going on shore. The storm carried away his tiller and loosened the rudder. The mainyard was too shaky to spread even a topsail. The terror by day was followed by a terror by night.

Next morning the wind blew strongly in squalls from the south. Fourteen of the nineteen prizes (for the *Achille* was no more) were found to be manageable and were towed off to the west and ordered to rendezvous round the *Royal Sovereign*. Three prizes, the *Santa Ana*, the *Algeciras*, and the *Neptune*, got away, but the *Neptune* sank before reaching Cadiz. The *San Ildefonso*, the *Swiftsure*, and the *San Juan Nepomuceno* were sent to Gibraltar. The ticklish business of towing the others was begun. The gale did not blow itself out. It was stronger than ever on the 23rd and the sea ran so high that the towing ropes were snapped.

That afternoon ten enemy sail were seen to leeward. They had not been hotly engaged in the battle and they looked formidable to the battered, exhausted English. Collingwood collected a force out of the least injured of his ships and formed a line to resist the attack. The enemy's courage failed and they retreated after retaking two of the prizes as they drifted unattended.

The foul weather continued. One course only seemed open

to the distraught commander : he made the signal to destroy the prizes. It tore his heart to do so. Four million pounds in prize-money, he calculated, would have to be sacrificed. He saw a fortune slipping through his fingers, but it was the only way, in such a storm, to make sure that the captured ships did not fall into the hands of France and Spain. The mighty *Santissima Trinidad* was cleared of men and sunk. Four more were run on to the rocks and wrecked. The *Redoubtable* sank astern of the English *Swiftsure* while in tow. Codrington, towing a prize belonging to the *Bellerophon* in safety for three days, had his topsails blown out of the bolt-ropes and was obliged to give up his capture. It was the worst hurricane he had ever seen and he was then only six miles from the coast, near St. Mary's. The *Indomptable* was lost with all her crew. Fourteen great ships were burned, sunk, or run on shore. There would be, it was clear, little or no prize-money for the business. Historians in his own and following ages would blame him for the decision he so hated making.

"Collingwood's desire to preserve the prizes was as great as anyone in the fleet," Blackwood wrote. "Could you witness the grief and anxiety of Admiral Collingwood (who has done all that an admiral could do) you would be very deeply affected."

Collingwood wrote home that he was "worn almost to a shadow!" He was heart-broken in his own odd way at losing the prizes. "After such a battle," he wrote, "such a glorious fight, having nineteen of their ships in our possession, to be so completely dispersed by that unhappy gale, that for three days I had reason to fear that not one of them would have remained to us, but many be driven into their own port. The condition of some of our own ships, too, was such that it was very doubtful what would be their fate. Many a time would I have given the whole group of our captures to have ensured our own. But affairs were managed better for us.

We saved four from the general wreck and the loss of the enemy is greater than it would have been without the gale, for of the ships which came out to try their fortune a second time, two were wrecked, which made us amends for the *Santa Ana* and *Algeciras*, which were driven into Cadiz. Such a triumph as the whole would have been, coming into port in England, might have made us proud and presumptuous, and we ought to be content with that good fortune which Providence has thought sufficient. I can only say that in my life I never saw such exertions as were made to save those ships, and would rather fight another battle than pass such a week as followed it."

Lord St. Vincent approved his decision to destroy the prizes. "Collingwood's conduct after Trafalgar," he told Eldon, "in destroying under difficult circumstances the defeated fleet was above all praise." And Sir J. K. Laughton, summing up judicially in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, wrote: "The question does not now admit of solution: for though we know that the prizes were lost, we do not know that they would have been equally lost if the alternative course had been followed."

One thing only was left to do: he would lighten the miseries of the wounded as much as he could. He sent a flag to the Governor of Cadiz and offered him his wounded. The response was overwhelming. "Nothing," Collingwood wrote, "could exceed the gratitude expressed by him for this act of humanity; all this part of Spain is in an uproar of praise and thankfulness to the English."

"Solana sent me a present of a cask of wine, and we have had a free intercourse with the shore. Judge of the footing we are on when I tell you he offered me his hospitals and pledged the Spanish honour for the care and cure of our wounded men."

"Our officers and men who were wrecked in some of the prize ships were most kindly treated: all the country was

on the beach to receive them, the priests and women distributing wine and bread and fruit among them. The soldiers turned out of their barracks to make lodging for them, whilst their allies, the French, were left to shift for themselves with a guard over them to prevent them from doing mischief."

## JUBILATION

**M**EANWHILE, Lieutenant Lapenotiere, in the *Pickle* schooner, had been driving before the gale for England with Collingwood's despatches. He left the fleet on October 26 and entered the Thames on November 5. It was 1 a.m. on November 6 when he reached London. Pitt was the first to hear the news two hours later. He was roused from bed and the despatches handed to him. They stripped him of his phlegm. "I have often been called up at various hours by the arrival of news," he told Lord Malmesbury, "but whether what I read was good or bad I could always lay my head on my pillow and go soundly to sleep again. This time, however, the great event announced brought with it so much to weep over as well as to rejoice at that I could not calm my thoughts but at length got up."

The courier was sent on to Windsor, where the King was the next to read Collingwood's letters at 7 a.m. The Royal Family was deeply moved. They went into St. George's Chapel and returned thanks for the victory.

For once the London mob was stunned. "Not one individual," Lord Malmesbury wrote, "who felt joy at this victory, so well timed and so complete, but first had an instinctive feeling of sorrow. . . . I never saw so little public joy. The illuminations seemed dim and, as it were, half clouded by the desire of expressing the mixture of contended feelings; every common person in the streets speaking first of their sorrow for Nelson and then of the victory." Presently

it dawned upon the country that the fear of invasion was ended. Once more the nation swaggered. England's love of bombast was indulged to the full. Among the addresses presented to the King to mark the occasion, was one from the "peninsular town of Tenby" whose "sons of the waves" declared themselves to be "glowing with the most fervent patriotism and loyalty." In addressing the King they wrote : "We, the mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses of the ancient and loyal borough of Tenby in South Wales in common council assembled with the most profound sense of the wisdom and goodness of the Omnipotent Disposer of all events dutifully presume at this important time to address your majesty. . . .

" We venture most cordially to congratulate your most excellent majesty on the late astonishing and unrivalled triumph obtained by your royal fleet over the combined squadrons of Spain and France, when no less than twenty ships of their line of battle have been taken and destroyed ; several others miserably shattered and effectually crippled ; also four French runaways have been since intercepted and captured, to the terrible disgrace and humiliating disappointment of the upstart usurper of France, all at the critical hour when the sanguinary tormentor of Europe was avowing his desires of ships and naval acquisitions ! So may this Corsican pest and scourge of the world always find his wants and wishes gratified, till Gaul (however galled) be retrenched within the ancient limits of the Rhône and the Seine.

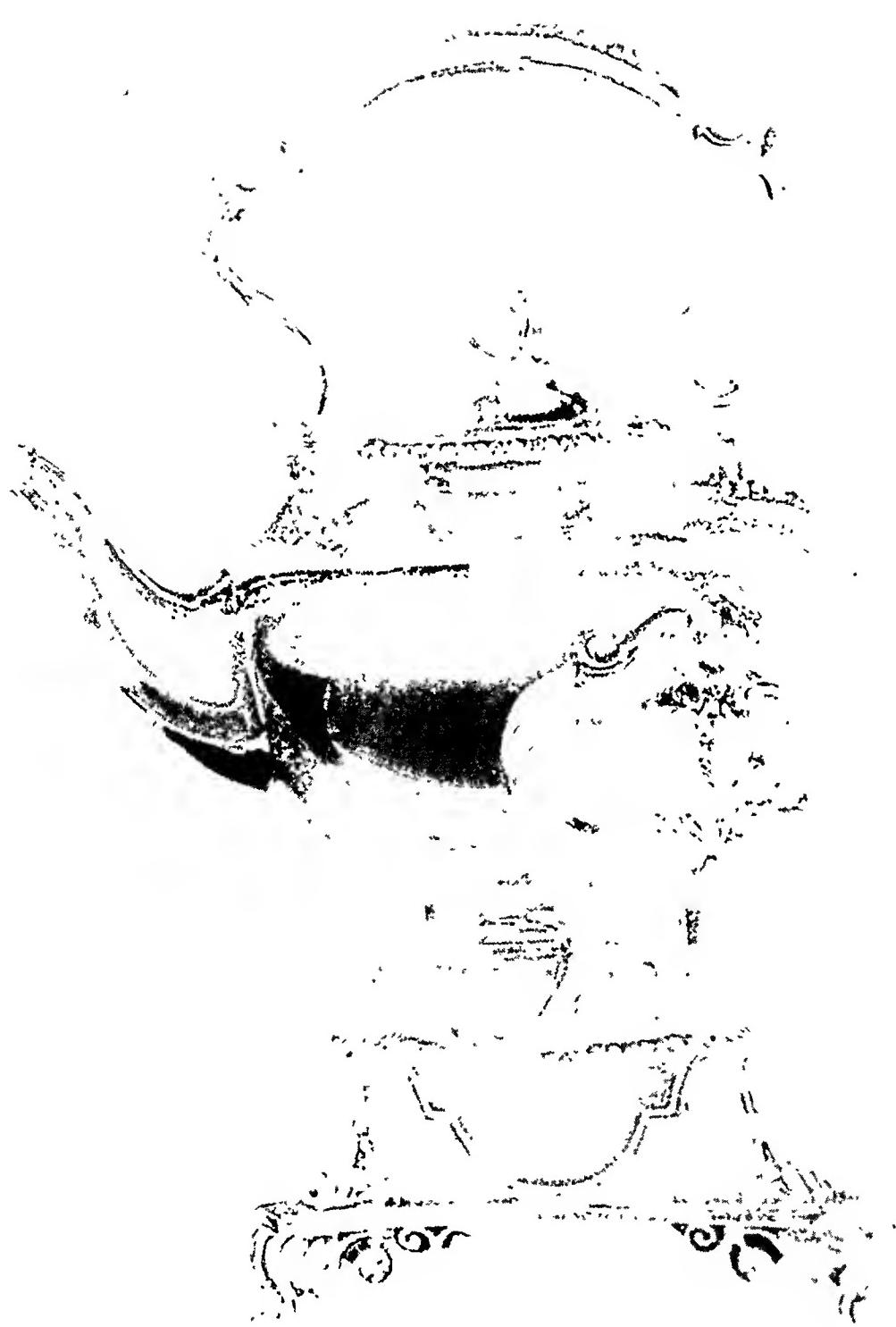
" And God grant, royal sire, that the successful feats of your majesty's naval warriors may still more augment the zeal (eager as it ever is) of all Britannia's champions, till, once again, the Rhine and the Danube resound with Albion's cannon, and perfidious Bavaria tremble in her most recluse recesses, under the gloomy clouds of impending vengeance. Nor doubt we all that celestial justice (however Heaven may alarm us with some checks, to have recourse to Omnipotence, and to court mercy by repentance) will at length crown yo'

righteous cause with victory, and finally overwhelm your majesty's false and flagitious adversaries."

Collingwood was created a peer with the title of Baron Collingwood of Caldburne and Hethpoole in the County of Northumberland. There was a pension to go with it of £2000 a year for life, and on his death Sarah was to have £1000 a year and his children £500 a year each. The title was to descend to his next two male heirs only. His old schoolfellow Jack Scott, now Lord Chancellor of England, was impressed. It occurred to him that if Collingwood was to return and take his seat in the House of Lords, it would fall to him, as the occupant of the Woolsack, to express the thanks of the House (to which neither of them—as schoolboys—could expect to be raised) for his eminent services to his country. It made a good topic for polite conversation.

The Corporation of Newcastle-on-Tyne decided that its acknowledgment of Collingwood's services must take some tangible form, and on November 21, 1805, voted the sum of one hundred and fifty guineas for the purchase of a silver kettle. This they inscribed: "To their distinguished fellow Burgess, Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood, in testimony of their high estimation of his eminent services to his King and Country in various Naval Engagements and especially at the memorable battle of Trafalgar, when he gallantly led the van of the British fleet into action and after having succeeded to the chief command compleated the most brilliant decisive victory over the combined squadrons of France and Spain." He was made a freeman of Trinity House, Newcastle, and the local Volunteer Infantry subscribed to a piece of plate valued at one hundred and twenty-five guineas.

Even more welcome was a flattering letter from the King. "His Majesty considers it very fortunate," he wrote, "that the command under circumstances so critical, should have devolved upon an officer of such consummate valour, judgment, and skill as Admiral Collingwood has proved himself."



*By courtesy of the Art Gallery Committee, Newcastle City Cou*

Silver Kettle presented to Collingwood by the Corporation  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne for his work at Trafalgar.

From a picture in the Laing Art Gallery and Museum, New



to be, every part of whose conduct he considers deserving his entire approbation and admiration. The feeling manner in which he has described the events of that great day and those subsequent, and the modesty with which he speaks of himself whilst he does justice, in terms so elegant and so ample, to the meritorious exertions of the gallant officers and men under his conduct have also proved extremely satisfactory to the King."

Lord Chancellor Eldon was particularly pleased at the way in which Collingwood's literary style won Royal approval. It reflected credit both on himself and their former school-master, the Rev. Mr. Moises, now eighty years of age. He hastened to inform the old man :

" Dear Sir : I cannot forbear congratulating you, whilst we are all congratulating our country, upon the services which your former scholar, and my old schoolfellow, Lord Collingwood, has done the country, and the honour he has done himself.

" I can sincerely assure you that my satisfaction upon the late events have been materially increased by a notion I entertain that you would receive some pleasure in recollecting that he had been educated under you.

" My gracious master, the King, observing the other day that Collingwood's was an excellent letter, added immediately : ' He was, however, bred at the same school as the Chancellor.' I told him that I was confident the admiral would refer to you all the merit he had, either in expressing himself so well as to his language, or in expressing sentiments which do him so much honour as a virtuous and pious man. God bless you, my dear Sir."

The Duke of Clarence, claiming to a brother admiral and a sincere well-wisher of his King and country, was another who wrote to congratulate Collingwood. Both St. Vincent and Nelson had, he recalled, accepted a sword from him in the hour of victory and he hoped that Collingwood would now

confer on him the same pleasure, and accordingly he sent a sword which he hoped the Vice-Admiral would accept with his sincere wishes for his future welfare.

The Duke proved the sincerity of his gesture in January when in the House of Lords he moved an amendment to Lord Hawkesbury's motion of thanks to Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood and the officers and men under his command in the action off Trafalgar. The Duke of Clarence urged that the specific thanks of the House should be given to Collingwood for the prompt obedience with which he had executed Nelson's orders, "for his integrity in forcing the enemy into action; and more especially for his exertions in destroying those vessels which were captured when he found they could not be retained." The Duke pressed his case so hard that it was agreed to insert the words "and for his (Collingwood's) conduct after the action" and the motion was carried unanimously.

On the same day the House of Commons unanimously accepted Castlereagh's resolution "that the House do highly approve and acknowledge the conduct and behaviour of the seamen and marines in the said action. That the Speaker do signify the said resolutions to Lord Collingwood and that his lordship be desired to communicate the same to the officers and men serving under him." The loss of the prizes had been glossed over.

So many towns wished to do him honour that he could scarcely keep account of them all. He was so busy as he kept watch before Cadiz that his dinner-time became a plague to him for the interruption and delay it caused. The people of England were kind beyond example. He received freedoms and congratulatory letters from London, the City, the Goldsmiths' and Drapers' companies, from Bath, Bristol, Exeter, and Cork. He was already a freeman of Portsmouth and Southampton. Peers to whom he was little known except by name wrote to congratulate him.

For the moment he was a happy man. He caught and preserved the joy of that brief interval in a letter to his wife : " It would be hard if I could not find one hour in which to write to my dearest Sarah to congratulate her on the high rank to which she has been advanced by my success. Blessed may you be, my dearest love, and may you long live the happy wife of your happy husband. I do not know how you bear your honours, but I have so much business on my hands from dawn till midnight that I have hardly time to think of mine except it be in gratitude to my King, who has so graciously conferred them upon me. But there are so many things of which I might justly be a little proud—for extreme pride is folly—that I must share my gratification with you. The first is the letter from Col. Taylor, His Majesty's private secretary, to the Admiralty to be communicated to me. I enclose you a copy of it. It is considered the highest compliment the King can pay, and, as the King's personal compliment, I value it above everything. I am told when my letter was carried to him he could not read it for tears, joy, and gratitude to Heaven for our success so entirely overcame him. I have such congratulations, both in prose and verse, as would turn the head of one a little more vain than I am. The adding a red flag at the main on this occasion is a proud thing : but I will tell you what I feel nearest to my heart, after the honour which His Majesty has done me, and that is the praise of every officer in the fleet. And though, perhaps, there will be some in England who will ask : What have they done with their prizes ? I can only say, if they are not satisfied they are hard to please, when, of the combined fleet, which has so long held the nation in dread, there only remains one ship which can go to sea for many months and only nine in being.

" What does Admiral Roddam say of our fight ? It would have done his heart good to have seen it. There is one thing that has made a considerable impression upon me. A week

before the war, at Morpeth, I dreamed distinctly many of the circumstances of our late battle off the enemy's port, and I believe I told you of it at the time: but I never dreamed I was to be a peer of the realm.

"How are my darlings? I hope they will take pains to make themselves wise and good, and fit for the station to which they are raised."

Only the Admiralty seemed to have abandoned him. Though he was working for everything that was to promote the interest of his country he never heard from them. He deluged them with correspondence, but they never replied.

To Sarah, Trafalgar meant more than a title and a silver kettle. She became a social lioness. In a letter to her friend, Mary Woodman, she has left a Jane Austenish account of a victory ball at Newcastle: "I must begin this account of the ball with the three ladies' dresses from this house. Mrs. Trevelyan wore white sarsnet with lace let in round the breast and a silver gauze pinned upon her head. Miss Brown was plain and elegant—a white, thin, muslin dress, short, and a white satin waist over it with a gold band on her head. My dress was my black velvet gown with my gold trimming down the front and round the breast and sleeves. It looked, I must say, very handsome. My black and gold handkerchief was on my head, gold lace bands, and my diamonds and topazes. So much for her ladyship. . . ."

The party left at nine o'clock for the city's mansion house. Mr. Mayor requested the honour of the first two dances, but her ladyship declined. "The ball-room was beautiful and proved sufficiently light, but the heat was beyond everything from the number of lamps—fifteen behind each transparency. The company looked brilliant and everyone well dressed. The Ridleys, Brandlings, Ellisons (Hebburn), Mrs. Lisle and her young ladies, the Riddells, Bewicks, Blacketts. About 170 sat down to supper and at the next ball they expect 200.

"The supper was very handsome—soups and game of all kinds hot, and everything else cold. We did not go to supper until near after two o'clock. There was no dancing after. We moved the first and it was near four when we got home."

She continued on a different line. "My father is certainly much better. He continues to use the warm bath every other night and I fancy I must come to that myself as I have been much teased with the rheumatism in my hips, and I have it now in my knees very bad and last night got no sleep.

"Sarah has had a cold but is well again. They go to Mrs. Wilson's three times a week to draw and to dance and Mr. Kinlock comes to them at home once a week, and with Mr. Bruce and Mr. Thompson they are kept very busy." Mrs. Wilson's was a first-class girls' boarding-school at Newcastle, Mr. Kinlock was a dancing master, Mr. Bruce taught mathematics, and Mr. Thompson, organist at St. Nicholas' Cathedral, taught music.

The Admiralty might ignore him, but Collingwood had given England the right to dance.

Napoleon struck his camp at Boulogne and marched on Central Europe. Rosilly, sent post-haste to Cadiz to take up the command of the navy, found not eighteen fine French ships but four disabled ones and a fifth barely in a condition to hoist his flag and put to sea. The way was ready for Wellington in the Peninsula, for the English Navy was now supreme at sea and could support him unhampered. Napoleon had shot his bolt. It would take years yet to bring him to his knees, but old Mr. Blackett, with a mind untroubled, could soak himself in his bath every other night, Sarah and Mary Patience study astronomy in peace, and her ladyship preen before her mirror without fear of foreign invasion. England would now never be invaded. The property owners, the bankers, the merchants could prepare for the industrial

revolution, for Peterloo and Chartism, for boxing and cricket, football and racing. Telford's roads, Stephenson's railways, Brindley's canals, Arkwright's mills—marching armies would never assault them. Collingwood had done better than he knew.

## PART V

### I

### AFTERMATH

COLLINGWOOD was now supreme. There was no one to challenge England on the blue waters of the Mediterranean. There, alone, he arbitrated on matters of politics, law, honour, and diplomacy. All the northern ports of Europe were closed to English commerce except those of Sweden, and to trade with that country merchantmen had to go via Constantinople. It was a long way round, but a safe one with Collingwood sweeping the Mediterranean clean of enemy craft.

Naples was the thorn which pricked him most. King Ferdinand was supposed to be the secret ally of England, Russia, and Austria, but his Ministers did as they were told by Napoleon.

Collingwood's first concern after the battle was to preserve intact the blockade of Cadiz. He kept the sea outside the port with the least injured of his ships until the worst of the cripples had sailed for England, where he judged it best to send all those needing material repairs. When ten ships had been sent home he went to Gibraltar to arrange for the departure of the others. His purpose in keeping the sea during the wintry weather had, he confessed, a little of pride in it. He wished to show the enemy that neither battle nor

storm could remove a British squadron from a station which they had been ordered to hold.

He was eager to bring the Rochefort squadron to battle. News reached him that they planned to prey on British merchantmen outward bound to the West and East Indies. Sir John Duckworth was at once sent with a detachment of fast sailing-ships to seek them out and drive them from the sea.

Collingwood was left off Cartagena with six sail. There were eight Spanish beauties in the harbour. Two were Spanish perfections like the *Santa Ana*, which, he grimly recalled, had towered over the *Royal Sovereign* like a castle. Yet had he not completely ruined her? He would ruin these, too, if only they would put to sea. The Spaniards were wonderfully quick in repairing and refitting their broken fleet. Soon they were able to move them down into the outer harbour of Cadiz. But there they stayed. Collingwood's hope of a battle was frustrated.

His duties were multifarious and wholly unexciting. Sir Sydney Smith had to be sent to the Calabrian coast, which the French were wasting. The Admiralty doubted the safety of Sicily and he had to take steps to ensure their peace of mind.

His relations with the Spaniards were peculiar. He had responded to Solana's gift of a cask of wine by sending him an English cheese and a cask of porter. Further presents, such as sixty melons, some baskets of grapes, figs, and pomegranates, were sent to him by fishing-boat. The enemy seemed to be cordial, and yet he was perplexed. There was, for instance, the exasperating case of Admiral d'Alava. When Blackwood had boarded the *Santa Ana* after she had struck her colours he had been told that the Admiral was seriously wounded and on the point of death. No attempt therefore was made to disturb him, but his sword was delivered to Collingwood by d'Alava's captain as a symbol of his submission.

Off Cadiz Oct: 25.<sup>th</sup> 1805

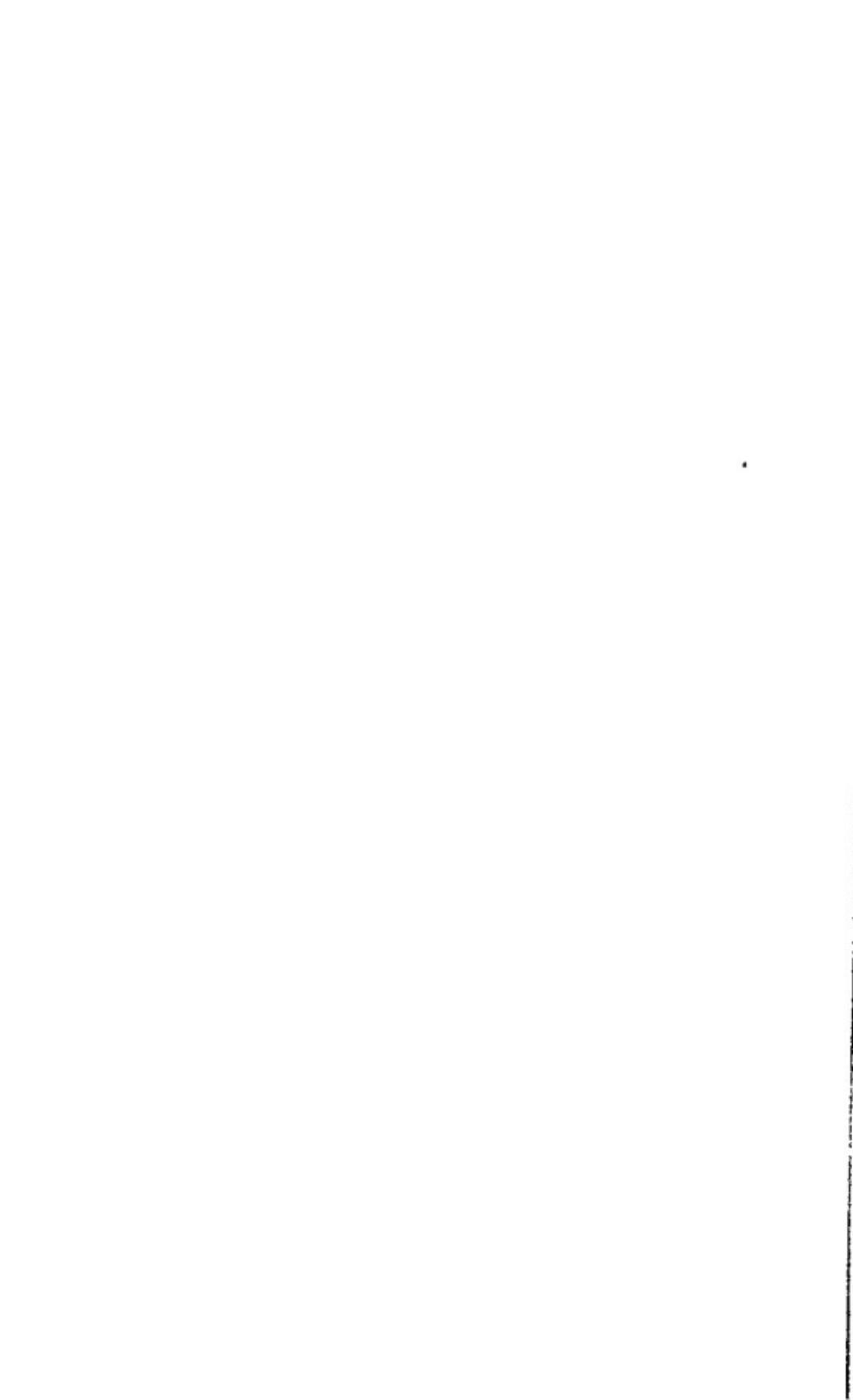
My Dear Sister

We fought a battle on the 21<sup>st</sup> and obtained a Victory - such as there is perhaps no instance of — we were 27 Ships - the combat fleet 33 — My dear friend Nelson fell in midst of the battle — I followed up what he began and in the end took 19 ships of the line — The Santissima Trinidad. of 130. St. Anna of 120, you are amongst them — Villeneuve the French Commander in Chief is now sitting by my side Gravina escaped — but I took D'Alba. Spanish Vice Adm. — his avros, Spanish Rear Admiral — & am told Major the first R. Admiral is also amongst the Captives — General Donnachadha in something now — but they have injured my poor N. too! very much so that I was obliged to quit after the action and come into a frigate to conduct the business of the fleet — The next day a certain

By courtesy of Mr. E. F. Collingwood

News of Trafalgar.

Collingwood's letter to his sister announcing the victory.



D'Alava, however, made an unexpected recovery, and Collingwood wrote to him to consider himself a prisoner of war. On December 23, the first moment the Spaniard found himself "able to subscribe his name," he replied objecting "After I fell senseless in the action of October 21," he said, "I have no further recollection of what passed; neither did I know before that my sword had been delivered to Your Excellency by the officer who remained in command of the *Santa Ana* till the end of the combat. . . . I enquired of that officer, Don Francisco Rigueme, and was informed that the sword presented by him on board the *Royal Sovereign* was his own and that with regard to me he had only requested of Your Excellency that I might not be moved in consideration of the few hours I was then expected to survive." There the matter rested. The Spaniards lacked, it seemed, perception delicate enough to comprehend such fine points of honour.

Rosilly, too, made difficulties over the exchange of prisoners. Collingwood drew up an elaborate list of the conditions governing the proposed exchange. Rosilly agreed and then promptly attempted to evade them. Collingwood took him to task. Rosilly replied with a long explanation and an apology. It cut no ice. Before he threw it into its appropriate pigeon-hole the commander-in-chief endorsed it: "Admiral Rosilly's apology with some light French stuff."

Many and various were the affairs he had to settle. He was up half the night making arrangements. At one period he did not stir for ten days from his desk and scarcely saw the sun. Tireless letter-writer though he was he did not know how he was going to reply to all the notes that reached him. He worked from dawn till midnight. His eyes began to fail under the strain. He fancied he was going deaf. He would be only a mass of infirmities whenever he returned home.

On January 1, 1806, he wrote to Blackett that he had been on shore only once since leaving England and he did not know when he would go again. "I am unceasingly writing," he

complained, "and the day is not long enough for me to get through my business." The Royal Family of Naples bombarded him with letters. He was in communication with the Admiralty, with his captains, with Spain and France, with the Dey of Algiers, the Emperor of Morocco, the Governor of Tetuan, with every state and province along the Mediterranean shores. His hand grew cramped with writing. Only to Sarah did he willingly begin a letter. He wrote to her even when there was no boat available for sending away mail. He did it because he loved to write to her, and he knew that were it only to tell her he was well it would be gladly received.

His diplomacy contrasted strangely with that of Nelson. When his supposed allies, the Portuguese, had rationed Nelson's water supplies the fiery little man wrote to the British Ambassador at Lisbon and asked him for support in retaliation for this insult. "As to water," Nelson said, "I never heard before that any limited quantity was allowed, much less that if a dirty shirt was washed any French or Spanish consul should be allowed to say: 'You English may either wear a dirty shirt or go without water to drink,' and that a sentinel of a neutral power should presume to threaten to fire if an ally presumed to take water. I shall send a ship or ships to take water in Lagos. They shall wash or let it run overboard if they please."

The British Ambassador at Lisbon was also the recipient of one of Collingwood's outbursts on the subject of Portuguese inhospitality. "I have been fully sensible," he said, "of the jealousy entertained by the French of our ships being supplied with refreshments from Portugal, and anxiously desirous that a nation between which and Great Britain so long and so faithful a friendship had subsisted should not be on that account subjected to disagreeable discussions with an enemy, I have forbore to send ships to their ports. If the Portuguese minister meant that we should take our supplies secretly by night I certainly did give strict orders that no such illicit

correspondence should be held. What is due to neutrality we have a right to receive in the face of day. If Portugal be unhappily in such a situation that she must veil her friendship and look sternly at those whom she was wont to welcome with open arms her misfortune is to be deplored ; but I never will allow the dignity of the British flag to be questioned by the ships engaging in an intercourse which will not bear to be looked upon by the whole world. That our thus declining supplies, because the mode of furnishing them was considered as derogatory to the dignity of the British name, should be considered as an infringement of the most strict neutrality is what I do not comprehend ; and I should suspect that there must have been some misapprehension by the officer at Lagos, and that he has stated his own mistaken ideas instead of the fact."

They both got what they wanted.

Collingwood's diplomatic methods were not always above suspicion. He strove to hold the bogey of invasion before the Dey of Algiers. He dinned it into them that Napoleon would by degrees overrun the African states and take possession of his country. The Dey, he pointed out, could not prevent this in any better way than by firmly attaching himself to England. . . .

He heard that the French were active in Morocco and proposed that a British Consul should be sent to Tangier, the better to maintain England's interests and frustrate those of the enemy who proposed to buy cattle and horses in large numbers. Collingwood felt that they were really spying out the country. He was pleased to hear that though the Moors received the French civilly yet they showed "that kind of reserve which indicates a suspiciousness of the danger which might arise from an intimate connection." The Gallophobia of the Moors, diluted though it was, endeared them to him. It firmly influenced him in their favour. Their interpretation of treaties was simple, unsubtle, and unsophisticated. They

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were prepared to stand by the plain, unvarnished letter of an agreement. He came so to admire them that when his ships were involved in any dispute with the Moors he invariably believed his own men to be in the wrong. Greater love hath no Englishman.

## HIS PEERAGE

**W**ITHIN a few weeks of Trafalgar Collingwood began to have doubts about the value of his peerage. He feared the greater complication it would make in his way of living. An unwonted dignity in private would have to be acquired. A peerage must necessarily curtail his gardening activities, for he could not now be seen with mud on his boots and a spade in his hands digging like a navvy in a trench deep enough to swallow him. Yet he would not sacrifice his garden for any title. Nothing would induce him to dismiss old Scott. The gardener must now carry on for him, and new standards must be set to his work. His kitchen-garden would have to produce aristocratic vegetables, potatoes and "right noble cabbages to boot in great perfection."

His economical soul was troubled by the expense in which his new status would involve him. It was not until four months after Trafalgar that Parliament voted him his pension of £2000 a year, and in the interval he did not see how he was going to support his title on his pay of £1100. He told Sarah he rejoiced that they were an instance of "another and better source of nobility than wealth." They would be "rich without money by being superior to everything poor," but this boast rang hollow. In peace-time he would be on half-pay. How was he going to make ends meet? High rank and no fortune were the devil. He had the chief command, but there were neither French nor Spanish ships left on the sea. The enemy's trade was now carried on by neutrals. He

had never been lucky in the matter of prizes, and he had wilfully destroyed all but four of those captured at Trafalgar. Even now, at sea, his circumstances were straitened. His furniture and stock had been destroyed in the battle. He had scarcely a chair left that had not a shot in it, and many had lost both legs and arms. His wine casks had broken when he moved into the *Queen*, and his pigs had died in action. All these were losses that he would have to replace himself.

Since leaving England early in 1803 he had received only £183 and that had been not quite enough to pay for his wine. His soup was served to him in a tin pan, and he had borrowed a pewter teapot for use at breakfast. And now the patent office would assuredly demand from him large fees. Being great must be paid for, and he shuddered at the thought of how it would "pinch" him. The notion did pass through his mind that he might ask the Admiralty to pull a few strings on his behalf, but he put it from him. Others could solicit pensions; he was an Englishman and would never ask for money as a favour. He would not beg from a country he believed to be impoverished. "I am not a Jew whose God is gold," he told Blackett, "nor a Swiss whose services are to be counted against so much money. I have motives for my conduct which I would not exchange for a hundred pensions." His service was to be "untainted" by any interested motive. He did not care about being rich, he said, so long as he could keep a good fire in winter.

Nevertheless it angered him to think that someone, who had never done a hand's turn to deserve it, was reaping the monetary reward of all that he and Nelson had done. "I suppose all the public reward of money," he wrote to his sister, "will go to the Parson—the present Earl Nelson—who of all the stupid, dull fellows you ever saw, perhaps he is the most so—nothing in him like a gentleman; Nature never intended him for anything superior to a Village Curate—and here has Fortune, in one of her frisks, raised him, without

his body and mind having anything to do with it, to the highest dignity."

But there was something much worse about the title that had been conferred on him than the supposed lack of means to support it. He saw that his honours were to die with him and he began to bombard Lord Barham at the Admiralty and Radstock, Spencer, Grey, and Howick with a request for his peerage to be continued in the heirs of his daughters. "But for my constant service at sea since 1793," he told Lord Barham with touching candour, "I should probably ere now have had half a dozen sons to succeed me." He put his case to Lord Barham in a letter of singular polish and politeness :

" My family, my lord, has for several ages been of considerable distinction in the North ; but as it is now raised to a higher degree of eminence by the favour of my King your lordship will easily conceive that I feel a degree of ambition to continue its elevation to posterity that future Collingwoods may manifest in future years their fidelity to their country.

" I have not a son ; but if the honours which have been conferred on me could be continued in the heirs of my daughters I should be made very happy. I hope your lordship will pardon my having mentioned this subject ; but as the state of my family is probably little known to His Majesty I have taken the liberty of putting your lordship in possession of the fact and of my ardent desire on this subject."

It seemed to him so little he was asking that he could not understand why his wish was slighted. All he wanted in return for his enormous labours in the Mediterranean was "that kind of gratification which people feel in having their name continued."

Newspapers reached him in which he read that a pension was to be given him. He made the news an excuse for returning to the attack. A pension, he wrote to the Admiralty, was a thing he would never have asked for. Though he was not rich he was not ambitious of being so. " I had much rather,"

he declared, "they had given my title with remainder to the heirs of my daughters who will have fortune enough for their status without pension."

But no. It was Ushant over again. He was always, it seemed, to be cheated of what he wished. The only favour he ever asked the Admiralty on his own behalf was pigeon-holed, ignored, forgotten.

His money worries ought to have ended at this time. A cousin, Mr. Edward Collingwood, of Dressington and Chirton in Northumberland, died and left him his estate at Chirton, a small village to the west of North Shields. The house at which he lived was built in 1693, and here, later, Sarah and the girls lived for a time. With his pension, his pay, and this legacy Collingwood was now more than comfortably off. It is apparent from the executorship accounts respecting Collingwood's estate that his income from 1806 to his death averaged at least £10,000 a year. He was touched by his cousin's bequest, which was more generous than he had reason to expect, and instructed Sarah "to be very kind to Mr. Collingwood's dog, and so will I whenever I come home."

The very letter of his cousin's will was to be observed, he emphasised in a letter to Blackett. "Whatever establishment may be found there for the comfort of the poor or the education and improvement of their children I would have continued and increased. I want to make no great accession of wealth from it, nor will I have anybody put to the smallest inconvenience for me. I shall neither live there (at Chirton) nor were it for as many thousands as it is hundreds would I quit my present station to regulate it." He hoped that provision had been made for his cousin's butler and servants. He would not need them. Smith, his man, was a gentleman in manners and education and would see him out as his servant.

The winding up of the estate involved transactions which jarred him. It was proposed to mine for coal on land he now owned. Suddenly rents were to be jumped from £80 to £600.

I at such "unreasonableness." "They will He wondered selves," he wrote to Sarah, "for I would not for outwit themselfes in Northumberland be a party to such an all the colliers fair increase in rent is allowable, but this demand extortion. A bounds." He pointed out to Blackett exactly is beyond all and must not do. what he must

general principle," he told his father-in-law, "I

"As a general principle, the changes which the working of the colliery wish that in few of the people who are established in the will make as going to me and are of respectable character houses below moved as possible. Let them have the offer of should be rehouses as are or may be vacant, but I do not such public Id be common justice to turn out those already think it wou' nor would I consent to it for any increase of established ; r great."

rent, however, sition of Chirton aggravated what previously had

The acquire worse than extreme closeness in money matters. been little vobject in taking over Chirton must be to make it The great oce as possible. The colliery, which formed part as productivestate, must be let as speedily as possible. He of the real hat details should be sent to him of every possible demanded thnt and revenue. The discharging of some of the source of retests showed him in an unpleasant light, particu-smaller beqcase of an old acquaintance, Mr. Stanhope, who larly in the crest under the will. Stanhope had offended had an int by a speech he had made in the House of Collingwood regarding the pension given him for his services Commons r. Now he sought his revenge.

at Trafalgar heard from Mr. Blackett," he wrote to his sister,

"I have iugust, 1806, " a curious account of Mr. Stanhope's Betsy, in Alclaiming his personalities—the shabby creature rigour in 'old cask in which the wine was. I wonder he did wanted the he bottles too. . . . I have directed he shall not not claim tames from the Vincry, for they are fixtures necessehave the frexistence of the trees and can no more be pulled sary to the

down or removed than a chimney-piece. . . . I hope my brother will not allow him to remove anything he has not a right to."

His new means allowed him to indulge in little luxuries he had denied himself before. The Rev. Mr. Moises died and he sent home £100, of which £20 was a subscription for a monument for his "worthy master" and the balance for division among the Infirmary, Dispensary, Fever and Lying-In Hospitals at Newcastle. He had, he told Blackett, long wished to send a gift to Newcastle's charities "in token of my respect for my countrymen, but a letter from my bankers, informing me that the stream was dry, prevented my doing it before."

It was a new experience for him to be in debt. It was the first time he had owed money since he was a midshipman. There in the Mediterranean he got nothing, but his expenses were nothing. Nor did he want money, since Sarah had sent him some knives and forks and a teapot. It was on his home at Morpeth that he wished to be extravagant. He asked Sarah to choose parts of the grounds for planting with larch, oak, and beech wherever the land could be spared. Even the sides of a bleak hill, he recognised thus early in the art of afforestation, could be made to grow larch and fir. Nor was this an extravagance in his eyes, for he considered that such plantations enriched and fertilised country that would otherwise be barren. It was drawing soil from the very air.

For all his family pride and his desire to have his name continued he was no snob. "I have had a letter from a kinsman of mine (for I have several new kindred lately) who drives our descent," he told Blackett, "from Lancaster (Talebois), who came over with William the Conqueror and tells me of many great people to whom we are allied and that I am of much more noble ancestry than I was at all aware of. I do not know much of what we were formerly, but I can tell him that if I can get hold of the Frenchmen again I will be a viscount or nothing."

In the same lighthearted mood he complained that he was out of all patience with Bounce. "The consequential airs he gives himself since he became a right honourable dog are insufferable. He considers it beneath his dignity to play with commoners' dogs, and truly thinks that he does them grace when he condescends to lift up his leg against them. This I think is carrying the insolence of rank too far."

He found it difficult to decide whether to sell his Morpeth house and make his home at Chirton manor. The mansion at Shields had conveniences that Morpeth lacked, and corresponded more to his idea of what a gentleman's house should be. If he had had more luck in the matter of prize-money he would have bought a suitable residence for himself, but as it was he had not the means to buy what he wanted. Chirton stood in a neighbourhood that he disliked, amid the smoke of coal engines and every kind of filth. The notion occurred to him that in the letting of the colliery a clause should be inserted stipulating that no engine should be built within a certain distance of the house, nor should small coals be burned as ballast for the waggon-ways and roads.

Such moods were rare. He was lonely and fundamentally unhappy. He thought that such a man as old Scott was far better off in not being born a statesman—a man who had done more good in his day than most of them. Robes and furred gowns veiled passions, vanities, and sordid interests that Scott never knew. He had only Bounce to talk to and, like his dog, he was not content. Alone in his cabin, he composed doggerel about his old companion which he sent home to his girls :

Sigh no more, Bouncey, sigh no more,  
Dogs were deceivers never :  
Tho' ne'er you put one foot on shore,  
True to your master ever.  
Then sigh not so, but let us go,  
Where dinner's daily ready,  
Converting all the sounds of woe  
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They mused together, the dog and his master, during the long, lonely evenings. Bounce curled at his feet by his desk as he pored over his correspondence. The *Queen*, borne on the Mediterranean waves, pitched and rolled from time to time. The Admiral went on writing, writing, writing, sinking lower and lower over his desk. He was slowly killing himself for a country that had forgotten him.

## SICILY

**T**HE first nut he had to crack as diplomatist was Sicily, and a hard one he found it. The island was a key-stone in the arch Napoleon was building between Europe and the East. Collingwood was ordered to see that the arch was never completed. Nelson, with his dash, enthusiasm, and impetuosity, had been working for two years to this end and Collingwood, English where his friend was French, a Roundhead rather than a Cavalier, icily reserved instead of glowingly effusive, realistic as opposed to Nelson's romanticism, was left to carry on the work.

Ostensibly the Sicilian royal family had submitted to Napoleon ; actually they were secretly negotiating for protection from Great Britain, Austria, and Russia. Nelson had provided against Napoleonic vengeance in the event of these secret negotiations being discovered by posting a man-of-war off Naples for taking the Neapolitan Court to Sicily whenever necessary.

Russia insisted that King Ferdinand of Naples should sign a secret treaty permitting allied troops to enter Naples or Sicily at any time. Within a day or two of this treaty being concluded another was published in Paris, signed by Ferdinand, declaring that he would not allow the troops of any belligerent power to land on his territory or give the command of his forces to any Russian, Austrian, or English subject.

Russia at once demanded an explanation and Ferdinand promptly signed another secret treaty annulling his agreement with France and standing by his previous treaty with the allies.

Napoleon was determined that such " perfidy " must be punished. By proclamation after the Peace of Pressburg he declared that the royal family of Naples had ceased to reign and gave the throne to his brother Joseph. Russia had been inveigled into supporting this move at Tilsit. Ferdinand's followers deserted him. He sent Cardinal Ruffo to Rome to obtain the support of the Pope, but the Cardinal joined the invading French. The Duc de San Theodoro was sent post-haste on the mission which the Cardinal had laid down, but the Duc only improved upon his example and begged Joseph to find him a post in his household. Still Ferdinand did not despair. The Marquis de Gallo, Neapolitan Minister at Paris, was now sent to Rome to entreat with the Pope. What could he do, poor man, when ratting was the fashion ? The Marquis became Joseph's Minister for Foreign Affairs. One more blow Ferdinand was to receive. His Queen, in sanctuary with the English army in Sicily, was discovered plotting with France against her allies and protectors.

Machiavelli might have delighted in such a situation. All his powers would have been exerted to the full. But the Puritan Collingwood found himself struggling for life in an unknown element. And his task was complicated by the attitudes of Russia, Turkey, and more straws for the camel's back, the Barbary pirates. Russia was a powerful foe to contend with in the Mediterranean, where she had a numerous fleet. Her defection at Tilsit was a matter of gravity. She was the ostensible protector of Naples, was jealous of the exclusive occupation of Sicily by English troops, had control of the harbours of Albania and Greece, and possessed many of the islands in the Mediterranean. Plainly it would not do to fall out with her.

Turkey for a while was friendly, yet England found herself drifting into war with her. Collingwood might be master of the sea, but his task, now that he was commander-in-chief, was no light one. He pined in vain for his garden, but he

the Mediterranean shut from the entrance of a French fleet.

There was no hint of his real opinion of the Queen of Naples when at last he replied to her entreaties. "I am impressed," he wrote, "with the greatest gratitude for the high honour which Your Majesty has done me by the letter you have written me."

"I beg Your Majesty to consider me as an officer devoted to the service of his country. The Allies of my Sovereign and the Patrons of my friend, Lord Nelson, whose noble character obtained for him the regard of His Majesty, will be ever dear to me; and if my humble service shall aid in giving tranquillity to your kingdoms and happiness to Your Majesty, the pleasure I shall receive from it will be amongst the blessings of my life."

Nor did affairs simplify themselves. They grew so critical that he did not know which to take up first. The business of the fleet, in which he immersed himself down to its remotest details, appeared trifling and easy when compared with the other business he had to settle. The King of Naples in retirement at Sicily wrote him "a most piteous letter" which so touched him that he altered his plans to go no further than blocking the mouth of the Mediterranean.

"Most sincerely do I lament the unhappy circumstances which have befallen the Kingdom of Naples and have made it necessary for Your Majesty to retire to Palermo," he wrote to Ferdinand. "Considering the precarious and dangerous state of Your Majesty's dominions I have already sent reinforcements of ships to the coast of Sicily—some of which I hope will have arrived by this time—and now send two ships of the line which together will form such a squadron as will be superior to any force that the enemy can collect. They are some of the best ships of my fleet."

Sir Sydney Smith was in charge of this expedition with orders to keep away from Sicily all foreign ships of war and

to take possession of a secure port there as a base for the British fleet. Sir Sydney was expressly warned not to use in his efforts "explosion vessels or sky rockets." It was the first direction in the conduct of a campaign that the commander-in-chief had given. He knew of no favourable result from the use of such instruments. They served merely to exasperate. They harassed those who used them and, by reducing the companies of the ships, rendered them unfit for real service when it was wanted.

"As a general rule of warfare," Collingwood laid down, "they are unworthy of the English, for their operations chiefly affect laborious individuals who know nothing of war but its miseries. Besides, it is worthy of consideration that the Spaniards are nowhere so vulnerable as we are at Gibraltar. If they should be goaded to retaliation with very little activity on their part Gibraltar Bay would not be a safe place to live in for one night."

For twelve months the protection of Sicily was his chief occupation. The Queen pressed him to defend Naples instead, but he was deaf to her pleas. She would create him, as she had created Nelson, a Sicilian duke if only he would listen. "If such a title is offered me," Collingwood let it be known, "I will tell Her Majesty that I am the servant of my Sovereign alone and can receive no rewards from foreign princes." He thoroughly detested the Neapolitan royalists. "If Mount Etna were made of gold," he said, "Naples would still be poor." When the King became too importunate he put him firmly, and politely, in his place.

"In the wisdom of Your Majesty's councils," he wrote, "the attachment of the brave Sicilians to their Monarch and the powerful aid which is given by the British forces by sea and land, I hope Your Majesty will find a defence against any attack of the enemy. The moment that I was informed that the armies of Your Majesty's allies had retired from Naples I hastened to increase the naval force upon the coast of Sicily

with some of the best ships in the British fleet. . . . Besides these succours there is a detachment of the British fleet gone up the coasts of Marseilles, Toulon, and Genoa which I hope will have the good fortune to destroy them."

He told Sir John Acton that the defence of Sicily engaged his "most serious attentions." The fleet and the army were powerful aids, but the country itself must do its share. "The population," he pointed out, "must be animated to its defence not merely by the example of the British troops, but by the nobility and gentry engaging in the service of their Sovereign and bearing the fatigues of war in common with the people to whom an interest should be given in the preservation of their State by ameliorating their condition in every possible way. Self-interest is a powerful stimulus which pervades all human nature. Make those by whom the work must be performed at last and who alone can give security and permanence to what is done, more happy; give them a more perfect security for their property than they can hope for by any change and their hearts will engage in the service and Sicily be secure against the efforts of the enemy."

He urged on Acton the necessity of seeing that the ports of Syracuse and Augusta were properly fortified for receiving the ships sent to defend the island. Wood, water, and other necessaries would all have to be at hand.

It was now three years since he had put foot on shore. His health was good, but his body was growing weak and his limbs "ladylike." His eyes, too, were weakening. The horrid thought struck him that when at last he had his darlings about him he would be almost blind and not able to see them. It was a matter of pride to him when proof arrived that he had read Napoleon's mind aright the previous summer. "General Fox," he told Sarah, "has sent me from Gibraltar Buonaparte's plan of attack for last summer. In every part it corresponds with what my idea of it was—to unite all his fleet, mislead ours to the West Indies, push into the Channel,

where he was to join the army, and proceed to England. My having blockaded them is stated as the reason why the plan was changed ; and then their defeat put a complete end to what was intended to be adopted in exchange for it."

But these were but incidents in the monotony of his work. As late as July the Queen was still pestering him to attack Naples, while the King and Sir John Acton considered that the main business was to defend Sicily. He had no patience with the Queen and dismissed her plan as " the vainest dream that ever entered the imagination of a woman." Rumours reached him that Sardinia was to be attacked, but he discredited them. " I suspect them all to be a deception by which if they could divide our force in defending Sardinia or supporting the insurgents in Calabria there would be so much less to resist them where I believe they will make a serious attack," he advised the Admiralty.

Accordingly he directed Sir Sydney Smith, who had taken possession of Capri, to be cautious in planning the cruises of his line-of-battle ships.

The sameness of the scene wearied him. The life was the dullest that could be imagined. He had need of the utmost patience to endure it.

## MEDITERRANEAN LIFE

THE command of the Mediterranean had a host of problems in itself. He was short of ships. He found himself pinched for force to spread over the extensive seas he had to range. The Spanish fleet remained shut up in Cartagena and Cadiz. There was no reason why they should ever come out. Their trade was being carried on by neutral countries and so their merchantmen did not need protection. The property of the enemy was secure while he buffeted about the seas unceasingly and only with difficulty protected English interests. And it galled him to discover that the neutral vessels—"those invaders of our rights"—were insured by English underwriters.

"It is a most nefarious practice," he complained to Blaekett, "which has put me out of conceit with mercantile practice. They may give me fine vases and high praises, but they must show the same regard for their country that I feel before they can gain my esteem."

The few ships he had were in a bad condition. Even the *Britannia* and *Dreadnought*, two of the finest craft in the Navy, were very foul. They had been fitted at the beginning of the war and as their holds had been stowed by convicts, as the practice was, they had hardly ever been serviceable. He could not understand the short-sightedness of those at home in giving the fitting out of men-of-war over to inexperienced boys or to old creatures who had almost forgotten what a ship was. Fitting out was a business which ought to be performed by the most skilful and experienced officers for

both service and healthiness greatly depended on their first fitting.

Nor could he understand on what principle the Admiralty acted in the matter of promotion. He saw the names of "some very indifferent young men" among those promoted, youngsters who never went to sea without meeting with some mischief through want of common knowledge and care. Even the brigs they brought out to him needed a dockyard. Ships of the line never had anything for artificers to do. He promptly snubbed the Admiralty's favourites and sent them home, for their service amounted to nothing.

"Better to give them a pension and let them stay on shore," than trouble him. While the Admiralty made their own officers they disregarded his own recommendations for promotion. His first lieutenants pined to become captains, and grew restless and pressed to be sent home when recognition never came their way. By staying at sea they seemed only to lose any chance they had to promotion. It mortified him to see them passed over in this way. Incessantly he pleaded with the Admiralty. It was his maxim that promotion should be rapid, on the spot, and come from the commander-in-chief.

"Lieutenant Landless," he complained, "an old and valuable officer, who has followed me through the war, is passed over while persons serving in private ships are made post-captains. As for my second lieutenant it is a happy circumstance for him to have fallen in battle, for he is thereby spared the mortification to which he would otherwise have been subjected. Clavell, my companion in the most desperate engagement ever fought at sea, owes his trifling promotion to a death vacancy. So mortified are the young men who fought at Trafalgar that they all ask leave to go home as they have actually lost their chance of promotion by being with the fleet."

He told the Admiralty bluntly that the whole

promotion was highly detrimental to the public service. As in all professions, he pointed out, many served in the Navy more from motives of individual interest than from public spirit. The laws, rules, and regulations, therefore, should be framed with this in mind and the interest of those who really served should be advanced. That was not the case, and this was the reason why "ships have very inexperienced youths for their lieutenants, and the surgeons have a premium, in a large half-pay, for going on shore. I could say a great deal on this subject if I were not afraid it would impress you with an idea that I am hard-hearted, which indeed I am not. The difficulty of getting officers is such that the subject has been much upon my mind. Few line-of-battle ships have more than two or three officers who are seamen. The rest are boys, fine children in their mothers' eyes, and the facility with which they get promoted makes them indifferent as to their qualifications." Such letters were strong meat for the Lords of the Admiralty to digest. They went on ignoring Collingwood's outpourings of his indignation.

He was equally incensed over the treatment of his seamen. A year after Trafalgar he wrote to Sarah that the honour of the thing was lost. "They have used us shabbily about that whole business," he lamented, "for the poor seamen who fought a battle that set all England in an uproar, and all the poets and painters at work, have not at this moment received one sixpence of prize-money."

He could, however, see that his men were well and comfortable. His flagship had a company of eight hundred men. Once she was more than a year and a half without going into port, yet he never had more than six at any one time on the sick list. He insisted on his ship being kept dry and would not permit washing between decks. Hammocks and clothes had to be regularly aired on the booms. Air had to be made to circulate below as much as possible, and he carefully looked after the diet and amusement of the crew.

Ocean April 28<sup>th</sup> 1806 —

My Dear Madam

There is your husband — take him — and god bless you with him — and him with you — may you both be happy as I with you — he has been a comfort to me while he was with me — and now it is your turn — He will tell you how I am purined — how I am plagued — but I hope I shall get through it — and some happier day see you & yours in all comfort — if you go to London. I am sure you will see my Sarah — for she esteem's you very, very much

I am very dear Madam

ever most sincerely yours

M<sup>r</sup> Grindale —

Catlingswood

By courtesy of the Art Gallery Committee, Newcastle City Council

Autograph Letter in the Laing Art Gallery and Museum,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



The naval architects at home came in for criticism. They were building ships with masts larger than could be secured. "On this subject I must observe," he told the Admiralty, "that the wall-sided ships, and those heavy-masted, are a continual burden upon the docks and arsenals while the ships of the old establishment, such as the *Terrible*, *Saturn*, *Zealous*, *Queen*, and such whose sides fall in are most to be depended on in winter for service. . . . In general the ships are over-masted for the sea service they have. For a summer's cruise they might do very well, but some ships here are from port sixteen to twenty months, and those with preposterous masts, as the *Endymion*, *Canopus*, and some others, are soon to pieces by the weight of them, while ships masted as the *Ocean* do not suffer. It is past doubt that the light-masted sail best."

Five years before the chief command fell to him he had complained that twenty Irishmen in a ship gave more trouble than five hundred Englishmen. With Johnsonian prejudice he had told Carlyle that Irishmen seldom became good seamen and were good in battle only because that was like the mischief they delighted in. They no more changed their manners after twenty years' service than an Ethiopian altered his colour by looking on snow. The difficulty in finding crews now led him to moderate his opinion. He presented the Admiralty with a scheme recommending that every ship which came out should bring eighty or a hundred boys of fourteen or sixteen years of age. He had had a hundred Irish boys under him and in two years they had become the topmen in the fleet. He proposed, therefore, that the Admiralty should raise yearly five thousand Irish boys and send him a large proportion. He would prepare them in ships of the line before transferring them to smaller vessels. In this way he believed that an "effective force might be raised for attacking the shores of France."

He was in a quandary what to do about the Mediterranean privateers. They were ruffians and although they annoyed

the enemy they committed depredations which he had to admit were "sometimes very irregular." If he allowed them to sell their captures freely in Barbary it might "give a latitude to their violence which would be highly improper." At length he found a way out that squared with his patriotism and his Puritan conscience. The Dey of Algiers should be requested to deal "kindly and hospitably" with the pirates, provide for their wants, and allow them to depart with their captures.

His mind was fully occupied, but his body was inactive. He ached for another fight. He was now the only officer in the service with three battle honours. Still he was not satisfied. He was miserable—uncertain where the enemy fleets and squadrons had got to and dreading lest they should slip past him. He knew no more of the world in which his wife was living than if he was an inhabitant of the moon. What was the good of all the vases and epergnes presented to him? A kind letter would have gratified him as much, for where was he to find a place for them in his small house? Nostalgia overcame him. Would that it were peace. He longed to peep into his own house and walk in his own garden. All he asked after his labour was to retire to the quietness of Morpeth. There, "out of the fuss and parade of the world, surrounded by those I love most dearly and who love me," he could enjoy all the happiness he was capable of.

Many things that he saw in the world gave him a distaste for its finery. Great knaves were not like those poor unfortunates who, driven perhaps to distress from accidents which they could not prevent, were hanged for some little thievery, while a knave of education and high breeding, who brandished his honour in the eyes of the world, would rob a state to its ruin. For the first he felt pity and compassion, for the other, abhorrence and contempt—they were ten times as vicious. His mood blossomed that summer into one of the finest of his letters :

"This day, my love, is the anniversary of our marriage and I wish you many happy returns of it. If ever we have peace I hope to spend my latter days among my family. Should we decide to change the place of our dwelling our route would of course be to the southward of Morpeth ; but then I would be for ever regretting those beautiful views which are nowhere to be exceeded ; and even the rattling of that old waggon that used to pass our door at six o'clock of a winter's morning had its charms.

"The fact is, whenever I think how I am to be happy again my thoughts carry me back to Morpeth.

"I wish I were with you that we might have a good laugh. God bless me ! I have scarcely laughed these three years.

"Tell me, how do the trees that I planted thrive ? Is there shade under the three oaks for a comfortable summer seat ? Do the poplars grow at the walk and does the wall of the terrace stand firm ? "

He was sick with longing to be home.

## TURKEY; EGYPT; AND THE DEFECTION OF RUSSIA

LIFE quickened in the autumn of 1806. At last Spain seemed ready to fight. Her fleet in Cadiz was strong and complete. It moved down to the outward part of the harbour. They had twelve sail of the line with troops embarked in them, four frigates, and two bomb vessels all ready to put to sea. A French squadron had been seen steering to the south-east. The commander-in-chief, with nine ships and two frigates, believed that they were about to join with Spain and give him battle.

The Spanish contingent, he was convinced, would make a push to sea some dark night. Perhaps they would try to elude him and get ships to the West Indies, Africa, and generally abroad on the ocean for the annoyance and destruction of England's trade. The excitement of the moment animated Collingwood as strongly as of old, but now his body did not respond to the demands he made on it. His limbs were too feeble, he found, to carry him about for two or three days and nights as they used to do.

In the midst of the hubbub he was ordered to forsake Cadiz for Sicily. The Admiralty refused to believe that the Dons ever would put to sea. They were much more afraid of the Turks who, formerly the Allies of Russia, were falling, according to Arbuthnot, the English Minister at Constantinople, for the blandishments of Napoleon. Arbuthnot was so anxious that he implored Collingwood, in a final urgent

message, to send a British squadron for the protection of England's trade and merchants in Turkey.

War was inevitable, he declared. Only the most vigorous measures could now preserve Britain's interests in the Near East. Arbuthnot had been pleading with Collingwood ever since February to send him armed protection and the Admiral had refused, saying his own position was far too critical to permit him to spare any ships. Now he allowed himself to be persuaded. He knew the mind of the Admiralty and acted instantly.

Sir John Duckworth was left to watch the Spanish in Cadiz. He himself went to Sicily where he would be centrally stationed to fight whoever came out first—Turkey, France, or Spain—and sent Sir Thomas Louis with three sail of the line, a frigate, and a sloop into the Dardanelles. Arbuthnot's nerve had given way. When Louis arrived at Constantinople in the *Canopus*, having left the *Thunderer* and the *Standard* to guard the entrance to the Dardanelles, the English Minister and his suite with all the British merchants resident in Turkey packed up and came on board. They feared, they said, death by torture.

Collingwood had been averse to leaving Cadiz, a mouse-hole he had watched with cat-like concentration for so long, but now came a flattering message from Grenville, First Lord of the Admiralty. The detaching of Sir Thomas Louis had anticipated the wishes of the Government and the "promptitude and judgment with which that step had been taken" was highly satisfactory. It was suggested that the force at Constantinople should be increased to five men-of-war and the command given to Sir John Duckworth. The blockade of Cadiz had to be called off.

Collingwood sat long at his desk composing for Duckworth elaborate written instructions. He would send five ships instead of two and give Duckworth orders providing against all eventualities. The document when at last it was

finished was a remarkable one. It exhibited perfectly the art of diplomacy as conceived by the commander-in-chief.

"Should Mr. Arbuthnot inform you," he wrote, "that in his opinion hostilities should commence, having previously taken all possible precautions for the safety of that Minister and the persons attached to his mission, and having disposed the squadron under your orders in such stations as may compel compliance, you are to demand the surrender of the Turkish fleet together with a supply of naval stores for the arsenal sufficient for its complete equipment, which demand you are to accompany with a menace of the immediate destruction of the town.

"At this crisis should any negotiation on the subject be proposed by the Turkish Government, as such proposal will probably be to gain time for preparing their resistance or securing their ships, I would recommend that no negotiation should be continued for more than half an hour; and in the event of an absolute refusal you are either to cannonade the town or attack the fleet wherever it may be.

"The force which is appointed for this expedition is greater than was originally intended, as it was expected that the Russians from Corfu would be ready to co-operate with you; but as its success depends upon the promptitude with which it is executed I have judged it proper (that no delay may arise from their squadron not joining) to increase your force by two ships. I have, however, written to Admiral Siniavin to request him to send four ships with orders to place themselves under your command; and that you may be possessed of all the force that can be applied to this important service and your immediate direction, you are hereby authorised to call from the coast of Sicily whatever can be spared as well as the despatch vessels at Malta; but as little more naval force is at Sicily than can be spared for its defence and for the convoy which may be wanted for the

troops, a strict regard must be had that that island be not left in a weak state."

He read it over and was satisfied. It was all perfectly clear to him. Every contingency had been provided for. Nothing could possibly be misconstrued. He sent for Duckworth, handed him his orders, and told him to study them. Duckworth soon began to make difficulties. "What," he asked, "am I to do if—?" Collingwood cut him short. "Read your orders, sir," he said, "and then, if you don't understand them, come to me and I will explain them." Once more Duckworth pondered the sheaf of papers in his hands. He gave it up. He supposed it would be all right when the time came. "I am perfectly satisfied," he said, and left the cabin.

Collingwood, too, was working for a hard taskmaster. Grenville approved his decision to augment the Turkish expedition, but he wished him, if "still strong enough," to watch Cadiz and to "keep as close an eye upon Toulon, as I particularly recommended in my last letter, affording at the same time the necessary protection to Sicily and the projected detachments from thence." If he could achieve all this "much would undoubtedly have been done with the force in the Mediterranean."

Duckworth passed through the Dardanelles and burned the ships lying before them. The news put new life into Collingwood. There never had been a business done with so much rapidity. For aught he knew, he wrote to Sarah on March 29, Constantinople might be burned "and all the sweet little Sultanas on board the English fleet." His satisfaction was premature.

Winds and currents stopped Duckworth at Prince's Island from getting up to Constantinople. He stayed there for ten days and tried by negotiations to avoid war and win back the Turks from France. Apparently it was difficult for him to restrict his conversations to spells of half an hour. His guns never thundered against the city of the Sublime Porte. It

was as Collingwood had thought. On England's part the conversations were carried on in good faith, but Turkey used them "merely as an expedient to gain time until their defences were completed and the fleet secured in the Bosphorus. When they had fully accomplished this they dropped all further intercourse and the squadron returned."

When Duckworth first entered the Dardanelles they had been defenceless. The talks had only been a blind. While they were proceeding a hundred thousand men had been turned loose on the task of fortifying the Straits. In four days what had been only ruined walls became crowded with artillery.

Nothing indeed had gone right for Duckworth. At the very start of the expedition the *Ajax*, one of the best seventy-fours in the service, commanded by Captain Henry Blackwood, had caught fire and blown up. It was a black, stormy February night. The captain was one of those who jumped into the sea to escape death. For an hour he swam about before being picked up. As he was dragged into a ship's boat he exclaimed in Collingwood's best manner : "I am quite cool and collected sir ; I am quite cool and collected." He was lucky. The crew of the *Ajax* had numbered 633 and 250 of them lost their lives in the disaster.

As Duckworth led his squadron through the narrowest part of the Dardanelles the batteries on either side, prepared by the army of Turkish patriots under French engineers, opened fire. He got through and engaged the Turkish fleet, who cut their cables and ran ashore. It was these boats which Duckworth burned.

All his fire and spirit seemed to be lost in this engagement. As he dallied in pleasant conversation with the Turks the French engineers in the Dardanelles were strengthening and increasing the defences. When he weighed anchor and returned they were ready for him. Guns with a calibre of two and a half feet in diameter and of such a size that even

when loaded with stone shot five midshipmen could follow each other on their hands and knees into the cannon's mouth, had been moved up into position. Now as Duckworth came back through the Channel he was the target for a storm of shot, of marble or stones, some of which weighed 800 lbs. He got through with the loss of 42 killed, 4 drowned, and 235 wounded.

Not for anything would he go through that experience again. Siniavin, the Russian commander, joined him off Cape Janizary and suggested that they should return to the attack. He declined. Where an English squadron had failed he was sure a Russian one would not succeed. He sat down to make his excuses to Collingwood.

"I feel confident it will require no argument to convince your lordship of the utter impracticability of our force making any impression," he wrote.

"At the time that the whole line of coast presented a chain of batteries two Turkish line-of-battle ships, both of them three-deckers, and nine frigates were, with their sails bent, and in apparent readiness filled with troops: 200,000 men were reported to be in Constantinople, ready to march against the Russians and an innumerable quantity of small craft and five vessels were prepared to act against us.

"With batteries alone we might have coped, or with the ships, could we have got them out of their strongholds; but, your lordship will be aware, that after combating the opposition which the resources of an empire had been many weeks employed in preparing, we should have been in no state to have defended ourselves against them as described, and then repass the Dardanelles.

"I know it was my duty, in obedience to your lordship's order, to attempt anything that appeared within the compass of possibility; but when the unavoidable sacrifice of the squadron committed to my charge must have been the consequence of pursuing that object it at once became my posi-

duty, however wounded in pride and ambition, to relinquish it." If Collingwood failed as a commander it was in not being able to inspire his subordinates with a courage and fire equal to his own.

He had, meanwhile, been directing an expedition to Alexandria. The Government was afraid that if war with Turkey broke out Egypt would ally herself with France, and to prevent this it was proposed to occupy Alexandria. For this Collingwood chose Captain Hallowell of the *Tigre*. Transport ships, capable of receiving 7000 troops with their stores and baggage, were prepared and ordered to be ready to sail at twelve hours' notice. Hallowell was ordered to observe the greatest secrecy in this movement, for Collingwood believed that the Sicilian Court, with its odd interpretation of loyalty, was willing to betray him to France.

"I have reason to suspect," the commander-in-chief wrote to the captain of the *Tigre*, "that an improper correspondence is maintained with France by persons in the confidence of the Sicilian Court and that your measures in preparation will be communicated to the enemy. This correspondence is said to be carried on in small boats to Marseilles, which you are to . . . intercept." Once more there was a pat on the back for him from Grenville. On leaving the Admiralty the First Lord wrote to say it was his "particular duty" to record his satisfaction in the orders and arrangements made by Collingwood for the service of the Dardanelles and Alexandria, "to both of which you have supplied all that can contribute to their success."

Hallowell succeeded where Duckworth had failed. Alexandria was captured, only to be abandoned by the next Government that came to power at home. Collingwood was aghast when he received orders for Egypt to be evacuated. Hallowell had laboured mightily. A threatened food shortage had been overcome. Now he begged to remain at the station for the duration of the war, without chance of distinction or

promotion, "rather than suffer the English name and character to be disgraced by deserting those poor wretches who have thrown themselves on our protection."

Collingwood was distressed by his letter and pleaded with the Admiralty for Hallowell to remain. He described the "extreme distress" of the natives at the departure of the British, for they knew "how little mercy" they could expect from "the Albanians who are alike the dread of Turks and Egyptians!" He was told, he said, that "these poor people are to be seen in crowds on their knees in the streets imploring protection."

The Admiralty was not to be moved. Egypt was abandoned. The Turkish expedition had miscarried. After all he had done, after wearing himself "to a thread," to have his plans miscarry like this was more than he could stand. He completely lost his temper. "The Turkish business," he wrote to Sarah, "ought to have succeeded. There was nothing in the state of the enemy to prevent it, but the day is completely gone by, for the defences which were neglected and nought are now impregnable."

In July the Admiralty suggested that he should take charge of the negotiations with Turkey, himself. He responded eagerly. Full of fight, he left Sicily for Constantinople to see what he could do.

Sir Arthur Paget had been appointed to take Arbuthnot's place as British Minister to Turkey and it was arranged that he should sail with Collingwood. The commander-in-chief hoped they would together achieve a great deal, for he regarded the Minister as a "very ingenious" man. He and Paget were met at the entrance to the Dardanelles, not with 800lb. shot, but with flags of truce, and a Capagi Bashi—described as "a sort of Lord Chamberlain of the Seraglio"—came out to the fleet with friendly letters.

The Capagi Bashi was given sherbet, coffee, and the Admiral went so far as to smoke a pipe with him. The "sort of Lord

Chamberlain of the Seraglio" was greatly impressed by this condescension on the part of the Admiral, who made a practice of repeating it all the time he was in Turkey. He quickly saw that the Turks liked his way of talking to them as though they were old friends and of smoking with them. Had he been treating for England alone he was convinced that it would have been easy to have made allies of the Turks, but unfortunately Russia had to be brought in too, and the Turks and Russians were now irreconcileable enemies. He was not sanguine of what he would effect. . . .

No attempt was made to force the Dardanelles and the island of Tenedos was taken as a base. Next day a reply was sent to the letters which the Capagi Bashi had brought out. The ship that took the reply anchored in the Bosphorus and the captain was invited to dine with the Capitan Pacha—the Lord High Admiral. He brought back a tale of wonder to enliven the mind of Collingwood, who recounted it fully to Sarah.

"There were only five at table," he wrote, "the Capitan Pacha, the Pacha of the Dardanelles, my friend the Capagi Bashi, with beards down to their girdles, Captain Henry, and the Dragoman. There were neither plates nor knives and forks, but each had a tortoiseshell spoon. In the middle of the table was a rich embroidered cushion on which was a large gold salver, and every dish, to the number of about forty, was brought in singly and placed upon the salver, when the company helped themselves with their fingers, or if it was fricassee, with their spoons.

"One of the dishes was a roasted lamb, stuffed with a pudding of rice; the Capitan Pacha took it by the limbs and tore it in pieces to help his guests; so that you see the art of carving has not arrived at any great perfection in Turkey.

"The coffee cups were of beautiful china, which, instead of saucers, were inserted in gold stands like egg cups set round with rubies, diamonds, and emeralds. They drank





only water and were waited on by the Vice and Rear-Admirals and some of the captains of the fleet.

"They spoke lightly of the Russians, when they spoke of them at all, and seemed to consider themselves as quite a match for them if the English were out of the way. When our gentlemen left them the Pacha of the Dardanelles presented them with a shawl, which is considered as a token of friendship."

The art of carving might not have "arrived at any great perfection" in Turkey, but the Turks were still as accomplished in the art of procrastination as when they had tricked Duckworth. Collingwood found it just as difficult to limit conversations to half an hour before commencing to shell as his subordinate had done. The commander was sorry to see a "tardiness in coming to any decision on the proposed negotiation" and was led to the horrid suspicion that the Turks would be much influenced "by the Councils of the French," for with "much fair language and professing a desire for peace" they held off and did not "advance to the principal point, viz. that of receiving the Ambassador and appointing a person to treat with him."

His suspicions grew when he saw the Turkish fleet moving further up the Hellespont every time they had a chance to warp. The Capitan Pacha stationed himself ominously near the Dardanelles' upper castles. It was borne in upon Collingwood that Constantinople would be much more difficult to attack than he had thought. The strong current from the Black Sea made it awkward for sailing ships to reach the city when the wind was light. And then the channel was so well fortified that to approach it was like going into Portsmouth harbour. Perhaps Duckworth had been right after all and even his mission would be fruitless. There seemed nothing that a squadron of large ships could do. It was not possible for them to keep the sea among the islands. Nor was it easy to find a port where they could be secure. He made a last effort to pin the Capitan Pacha to a definite pronouncement.

"It is now near a month since I arrived in these seas with a squadron of His Britannic Majesty's ships," he wrote. "Your Excellency knows that it is the duty of British fleets to present themselves to the enemies of their country; but I had entertained the hope that God would have inspired the Sultan of the Turks with the same holy desire which has ever animated the breast of my King, that peace may be established among all nations and that in the Turkish fleet I should have found not enemies but that friendship rencwed which has most unhappily been suspended for a time by the convulsions that have shaken the Governments of Europe.

"His Majesty, with this impression of friendship for the Sublime Porte, had sent his Ambassador to propose a renewal of that harmony and friendly intercourse that he wished to maintain with a nation, whose interests and preservation from the intrigues of ambition have ever been a subject of his solicitude and which a few years since called for the exercise of his arms.

"The Sublime Porte, professing a desire that this friendship which we offer should be established, has not yet proceeded one step towards it, and this irresolution calls on me, most illustrious Pacha, to propose to the Sublime Porte the following questions, which, as the Turkish Ministers are already informed on the subject, I expect they will reply to promptly and with that ingenuousness and truth with which they are proposed:

"Will the Sublime Porte accept the friendship offered by England . . . or do they reject the proposals and, influenced by malign counsels, determined on a state of war?

"If the Sublime Porte accepts the friendship of England, in what place shall His Majesty's Ambassador meet the Plenipotentiaries whom the Sultan shall appoint to conclude the treaty which is necessary to declare the renewal of former engagements and seal the bond of friendship between our nations?

" . . . If in a short period I have not an answer, I shall conclude that they intend to take such a part or are under such influence as they cannot without regret reveal."

It was sent, but the Sublime Porte was not to be moved to ways of " promptitude, truth, and ingenuousness." For days Collingwood waited, living " poorly enough " on " nothing but bad sheep and few chickens." Then the Capitan Pacha sent his sly, evasive answer :

" To my friend, Admiral Lord Collingwood.

" The friendly letter which you have done me the honour to write me has been received, and I have perfectly understood its contents. The letters which had been previously transmitted to us were, by me in conjunction with Ismail Pacha, forwarded to our Ministers at Constantinople accompanied by our strongest recommendations. No answer has yet been received.

" You are, of course, aware that in business relating to Governments eight or ten days are requisite before it can pass through the regular forms ; but be assured that the moment an answer is received it shall be communicated to you.

" Be satisfied that I love only the real truth and of this I take God as witness."

What could he do with such people ? His patience was worn out with the " nothingness " of his progress. The fleet was wanted everywhere, yet it lay here at anchor inactive. He had never, he felt, been in a situation of more anxiety, more hopeless of any good, or more vexatious in all its circumstances. Poison was sometimes sweet, but this was poison with all its bitterness. He quarrelled with Paget over his efforts to prod the Turks into a decision. The Minister resented his interference, but how could a seaman remain patiently doing nothing while an important service was at a standstill ?

Letters from home further exasperated him. Sarah worried

him to write at a time when he had nothing to tell her but a history of his miseries. He was astonished to find that in England it did not seem to enter the minds of the people how grave the crisis was. With complete unconcern they pursued a life of pleasure. Nothing interrupted the gaieties of those at home. He was moved to prophecy—the prophecies of Jeremiah. England, on the verge of ruin, required the care of all; “but when that all is divided and contending for power then it is that the foundation shakes. Alas! Poor England! Heaven knows but we may yet live to mourn over its grave !”

He weighed anchor and returned to the Mediterranean, leaving two ships near the Dardanelles until such time as Paget had finally satisfied himself that he could do nothing. The best thing to be done, Collingwood thought, was to get as near to the enemy as possible and now he made his way towards Corfu. To Ball he lamented how the Turkish “war” had embarrassed all his affairs. “It was undertaken,” he now declared, “in defence of Russian injustice, and behold how we are rewarded for it. The blockade of the Dardanelles appears to me to have been represented to our Ministers of much more importance than it really is. Since the month of April (he was writing at the end of September) no vessel of any kind is known to have gone into that channel, and yet there does not appear to have been the least want of any kind at the capital. The constant north-east winds during the summer are a complete bar to regular trade.”

France had acknowledged Russia’s claim to Corfu by the Treaty of Tilsit in return for Tsar Alexander’s alliance. England and Russia were now at war, and Collingwood found himself pitted against Siniavin, the Russian commander, with whom he had shared a common hatred of the French. This was enough to endear anyone to him and now he found his friendship ended. It was a pity, but such was the fortune of war. He itched to attack the treacherous Russians, but

hesitated, uncertain of his legal justification. It was a relief to him when the Admiralty ordered him to act against his former allies. He would be glad when he had found them and assailed them. If he could only come to grips with them and the French, and Heaven blessed his endeavours, he would at once go to England and receive, in the affection of his family, the reward he wished for.

He went from Sicily to Toulon and found the French squadron, of five sail of the line, appearing as usual to be perfectly ready for sea, but in all the French and Spanish ports the men-of-war invariably made such a show. They had not moved any great distance for two years and he could not believe that their appearance meant anything. Rather was it adopted, he thought, to keep him constantly at sea, wearing out his ships while they made every exertion to increase the number of theirs.

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## WEAR AND TEAR

LIFE at Syracuse was a pleasant interlude. The harbour was good and the people particularly kind and polite in their attentions. On his arrival the commander-in-chief was flattered to be visited in his ship by the nobility and Senate. Next day the military chiefs came out, and on the day following the Vicar-General and all the clergy. He held a levee of thirty priests—all fat, portly-looking gentlemen. The authorities gave in his honour a ball and supper of outstanding magnificence. It was the most elegant function he had ever seen and the best conducted.

The ladies were quite as attentive to him and his officers as they were to their lords, and his eye was caught by two or three little Marquisinas who were most delightful creatures. He had heard men talk of the *dieux de la danse*, but no goddesses ever moved with the grace that distinguished the sisters of the Baron Bono. He was forced to the conclusions that the nobility of Syracuse, who lived far from the Sicilian Court, had not been contaminated by its vices. They were certainly more truly polite with less ostentation and show. Yet a moral lesson was irresistibly forced upon the mind of Moises' pupil when he went on shore and saw the ruins of the old town. Once this, too, had been a place of great note, where all the magnificence and arts known in the world had flourished. But tyrants had risen to power and a city which had been twenty-two miles in circumference was now scarcely half a mile long.

Where the palace of Dionysius had been there was now a little mill and a pigsty. He saw the shattered foundations of an amphitheatre where formerly 100,000 people had assembled to see the public spectacles. The cavern known as "Dionysius' ear" he found perfect and curious. Sound was so reverberated from its sides that the least whisper was made as loud as a trumpet, and a little pistol, with a thimbleful of powder, was like thunder. Within the ancient wall were farms and vineyards and pastures. The thought came to him that in the course of time there might be cornfields and hop-grounds in St. James' Street or the Royal Exchange. . . .

As an antidote to French allegiance he dangled before Albania's eyes the capture of Corfu. Those he had appointed to blockade the island were strictly instructed to prevent all intercourse with the French. If Albania were to come out on the side of England she could possess herself of the island in a few days.

But now he did not press on his schemes with his old force. His limbs were weaker and more "ladylike" than ever. His labour was unceasing and his vexations many. His eyes were weak, his body "swollen," and his legs "shrunk to tapers." Yet they served his turn, for he had not much opportunity for walking. He who had loved company, whose prescription for human ills was a cheerful friend or two who could be merry without being loud, light and nourishing food, and a bottle (at least) of good claret after dinner, now hardly ever saw the face of an officer and was seldom on deck for more than an hour a day when in the twilight he went to breathe the fresh air.

For two years he had not let go an anchor. When gales broke his bolts he had not gone into port but sent a frigate for materials and repaired her as she rode at anchor. The Navy was wearing out. The oaks he had planted would not be grown sufficiently to be any use for that war, but he wrote to Scott to keep him up to scratch.

It was ironical that an officer who had captured a very small cargo boat, laden with cochineal and indigo, would receive more in prize-money than he had had since he came out. Sarah wrote in such a way as to emphasise she was still well and strong and able to take walks which were now past his ability. He would never be able to contend with her again. Impatience had worn him out and the constant life at sea. His service to his country could not be carried on much longer. He was weak and feeble and fit only to be nursed in quiet retirement.

He was suffering from a contraction of the pylorus—the opening between the stomach and the intestine. It was his only infirmity, but he was dying from it. Constant crouching over his desk as he went on with his voluminous correspondence had brought on the illness and the Admiralty would give him no respite. Hard constant exercise might have saved him, but he had no opportunity for it. It was in keeping with the irony that tinged his life that Collingwood, a man of action, who had come almost unscathed through three of England's fiercest sea-fights, who shouldered his way into the heart of danger, should die from a clerk's disease.

Castlereagh had told him that he was upon "a bed of roses" and he tried to believe it was so. So far as the enemy was concerned he could contend with anything they were likely to attempt, and, except for himself, he had not a sick man on his ship. For amusement's sake "assemblies, concerts, and plays" were given on shipboard.

"We have an exceedingly good company of comedians," he told Sarah, "some dancers that might exhibit at an opera and probably have done so at Sadler's Wells, and a band consisting of twelve very fine performers. Every Thursday is a play night and they act as well as your Newcastle company. A Moorish officer from Tetuan was carried to the play. The astonishment which this man expressed at the assembly of people and their order was itself a comedy. When the music

began he was enchanted ; but during the acting he was so transported with delight that he could not keep his seat. His admiration of the ladies was quite ridiculous and he is gone to his Prince fully convinced that we carry players to sea for the entertainment of the sailors ; for though he could not find the ladies after the performance he is not convinced they are not put up in some snug place until the next play night."

He planned a surprise for Sarah. He would have his portrait painted. They were so far apart and memory so poor a thing that perhaps she would treasure such a token. He mentioned nothing of his scheme until the painting was finished. He looked at the portrait and saw that it was good. Indeed it flattered the face that he saw in the shaving mirror every morning. He and Bounce were growing old, but his picture did him proud. He had the portrait carefully packed and sent home. He was inordinately pleased with his idea. What would Sarah say ? The letter that she wrote with cruel inconsiderateness froze his blood. She did not spare him. Each sentence cut like a sword. He had not realised how old he was, how wrecked his manhood, how broken his body. What was there left for him ?

" I am sorry to find that my picture was not an agreeable surprise," he wrote pathetically to his wife. " I did not say anything to you about it because I would always guard you as much as possible against disappointment. The painter was reckoned the most eminent in Sicily ; but you expected to find me a smooth-skinned, clear-complexioned gentleman, such as I was when I left home, dressed in the newest taste, and like the people who live gay lives on shore. Alas, it is far otherwise with me.

" The painter was thought to have flattered me much ; that lump under my chin was but the loose skin from which the flesh had shrunk away ; the redness of my face was not, I assure you, the effect of wine, but of burning suns and boisterous winds ; and my eyes, which were once ~~rk~~ and

bright, are now faded and dim. The painter represented me as I am—not as I once was. It is time and toil that have worked the change, and not his want of skill. That the countenance is stern will not be wondered at when it is considered how many sad and anxious hours and how many heartaches I have. I shall be very glad when the war is over."

A month later he wrote home : "I think, when you see the poor original creature, you will be reconciled to the picture. I have laboured past my strength. I have told Lord Mulgrave so, and I hope they will think of relieving me, that I may come and enjoy the comforts of my blessed family again and get out of the bustle of the world and of affairs which are too weighty for me. God bless me. How rejoiced will my poor heart be when I see you all again ! "

The lonely, dying man had no consolation but the memory of his love for Sarah. She was the kindest friend and most affectionate wife who had ever made a poor sailor happy. When her birthday came round he prayed that she might see many happy returns of the day, that she might long live a source of joy to him, a blessing to her family, and "an example of worth and goodness to all her sex." The day which had given to the world "so excellent a pattern of worth and goodness," would always be celebrated by him as a happy one. He closed his eyes and lay back. He thought of Sarah at Morpeth enjoying in her own warm house a happiness that was not known elsewhere in the world. He yearned to be home, but God knew when that blessed day would come. How thankful he was that Sarah was not "importunate" about his being here or there. She did not love him less than any lady in the land her husband, but had too much good sense to make his absence more painful than it was by a "teasing complaint" of what should be and was her pride that when his country needed his service he was devoted to it.

But as his strength left him he began to doubt the wisdom of that devotion. God knew, he exclaimed to Blackett, how

truly he had served, how unremittingly he had studied his country's interest, and how he had exerted himself to promote its welfare, yet when he failed he was criticised, censured, and sneered at. If he was successful in what he undertook he was told it was only what it was very easy to talk about. How little did the people in general know of war and of the anxious midnight hours seamen spent while those at home rested as happily in their beds as full stomachs would allow. His career, though a necessary one, had been totally devoid of comfort. It had been the ladder, the precarious and unsteady ladder, by which he had mounted to rank and fortune. Only now did he realise that happiness had lain quite another way.

He realised too late that there was no return. For a short while longer he would cling to the topmost rung. Then all would be over.

## MISSFIRE

**F**RANCE screwed up courage and put to sea. The Toulon and Rochefort squadrons combined to make a fleet of ten line-of-battle ships, some frigates, and a number of armed transports with troops, guns, and provisions. Ganteaume was in command, and he sailed for Corfu, arriving there on February 23. He was not seen until he was but a few leagues from the island. The news was sent at once to Collingwood, who since January, 1808, had been refitting and repairing his vessels at Syracuse. He was in a quandary. The enemy were out and he was unprepared. The British intelligence system was entirely non-existent.

Collingwood ordered out his frigates to scour the Mediterranean for the French. They failed to find them. With no news to guide him he jumped to the conclusion that their move on Corfu was a trick to draw him into the Adriatic so that Ganteaume could pounce in his absence on Sicily. Corfu was the one place where the flustered Collingwood never looked for the French. When by a process of elimination he eventually went there he found that Ganteaume had refitted and left.

His consternation was pathetic. Was not success the only criterion by which England judged and failure reckoned a great crime? Was Byng's fate to be his? Yet he could not see how he was to blame. The waters were now a desert. There was never a trading ship upon the sea from which to gather information. The little bits of scattered news that he

picked up were often contradictory, sometimes, he believed, fabricated to deceive him. He was worn out and almost crazy with his efforts and the anxiety. The man of granite thanked God for his constitution. He had felt, he protested, the service in his heart and left nothing undone that his anxious mind suggested. If he could meet the French it would be a happy day for Old England. "I have been long at sea," he told Sarah, "have little to eat, and scarcely a clean shirt; and often do I say: 'Happy lowly clown'! Yet with all this sea work, never getting fresh beef or a vegetable, I have not one sick man in the fleet."

Not all his officers were built like Duckworth. Captain Brenton of the 38-gun frigate *Spartan* had been fashioned in the same mould as the Admiral. He was brave and humane. Collingwood had once asked him why, when senior officer at Malta, he had allowed a French colonel, a prisoner of war, to return to France on parole. "They did not treat *you* so when you were a prisoner," he had pointed out. Brenton replied that the colonel had been taken by the *Weasel* sloop out of an Italian coasting vessel which also carried the colonel's wife and his two little children. The young mother was pregnant and in the excitement of being chased by the *Weasel*, and fired at, had a miscarriage and died. In these circumstances Brenton had allowed the colonel to go to Naples on parole on condition that after providing for his children he would return to Malta.

The captain of the *Spartan* was now to appear in another light. A crowd of sails was seen on the horizon as he cruised casually in the Mediterranean on April 1. Apparently he forgot that it was All Fools' Day and made haste to join the throng. He looked them over through his glass. "Who's that old-fashioned fellow who carries his mizzen topmast staysail under the maintop?" he asked his first lieutenant, who put his glass to his eye. "There are three of them that have it," the officer replied. "It's the enemy—haul yo 'n d

at once," Brenton cried. He was just in time. The ships he had gone so joyfully to meet now came up sharp in pursuit.

There was only one thing to do. Every rag of canvas that he had he crowded on his masts and found he could just keep out of gunshot of the nearest man-of-war. Somehow he must get word to Collingwood. Messages must be sent to Palermo and Malta, but he must not lose sight of the French fleet. He ordered the frigate's launch to be prepared. It was fitted with masts made out of rough oars and on these sails of a sort were stretched. Guns, ammunition, signal flags, rations, and water were placed in the tiny craft which, when it was night, was manned and lowered. Coffin, the third lieutenant of the *Spartan*, was in charge. He managed in his little boat until the French came up. Then he lowered his sails and crouched with his men in the gunwales.

The French swept by after Brenton and never noticed Coffin, who reached Trapani twenty-four hours after leaving the *Spartan*. From Trapani she went to Palermo and then made Malta. Once more British frigates thrashed the Mediterranean. Collingwood must be found. Brenton stuck fast off Gantecame. Each night he lay abeam of the French, and every morning he hauled away from the enemy. Once he was becalmed and the French almost had him, but a puff of wind providentially filled the *Spartan*'s sails and all drew away to safety. Day after day Brenton searched the horizon for the English fleet.

Collingwood, with twelve men-of-war, was ranging the Adriatic. He had no notion where the French were, but he was confident that soon he would fall in with them. On March 23 he issued his Battle Instructions. He had thought over the differences in strategy that had marked the Glorious First of June and Trafalgar and now decided that Howe's tactics were to be preferred to Nelson's. He earnestly wished the fight to be decisive. So much had been lacking at Trafalgar. The victory had seemed hollow when the price

were sacrificed. He would not concentrate his attack, but by advancing in one line, seek to engage all the enemy at once and prevent any of those flanking movements, such as Dumanoir's at Trafalgar.

"It is expected," he wrote in his Battle Instructions, "that the enemy may soon be met with on their way from Corfu to Tarentum, and success depends on a close and immediate attack of them. . . .

"Should the enemy be found formed in line of battle with the whole force I shall, notwithstanding, probably not make the signal to form the line of battle; but, keeping the closest order, with the van squadron attack the van of the enemy, while the commander of the lee division takes the proper measures and makes to the ships of his division the necessary signals for commencing the action with the enemy's rear, as nearly as possible at the same time as the van begins; of his signals, therefore, the captains of that division will be particularly watchful.

"If the squadron has to run to leeward to close with the enemy the signal will be made to alter the course together; the van division keeping a point or two more away than the lee, the latter carrying less sail; and when the fleet draws near the enemy both columns are to preserve a line as nearly parallel to the hostile fleet as they can.

"In standing up to the enemy from the leeward upon a contrary track, the lee line is to press sail, so that the leading ship of that line may be two or three points before the beam of the leading ship of the weather line, which will bring them into action at the same period.

"The leading ship of the weather column will endeavour to pass through the enemy's line, should the weather be such as to make that practicable, at one-fourth from the van, whatever number of ships their line may be composed of. The lee division will pass through at a ship or two astern of their centre; and whenever a ship has weathered the enemy it will

be found necessary to shorten sail as much as possible for her second astern to close with her, and to keep away, steering in a line parallel to the enemy's, and engaging them on their weather side.

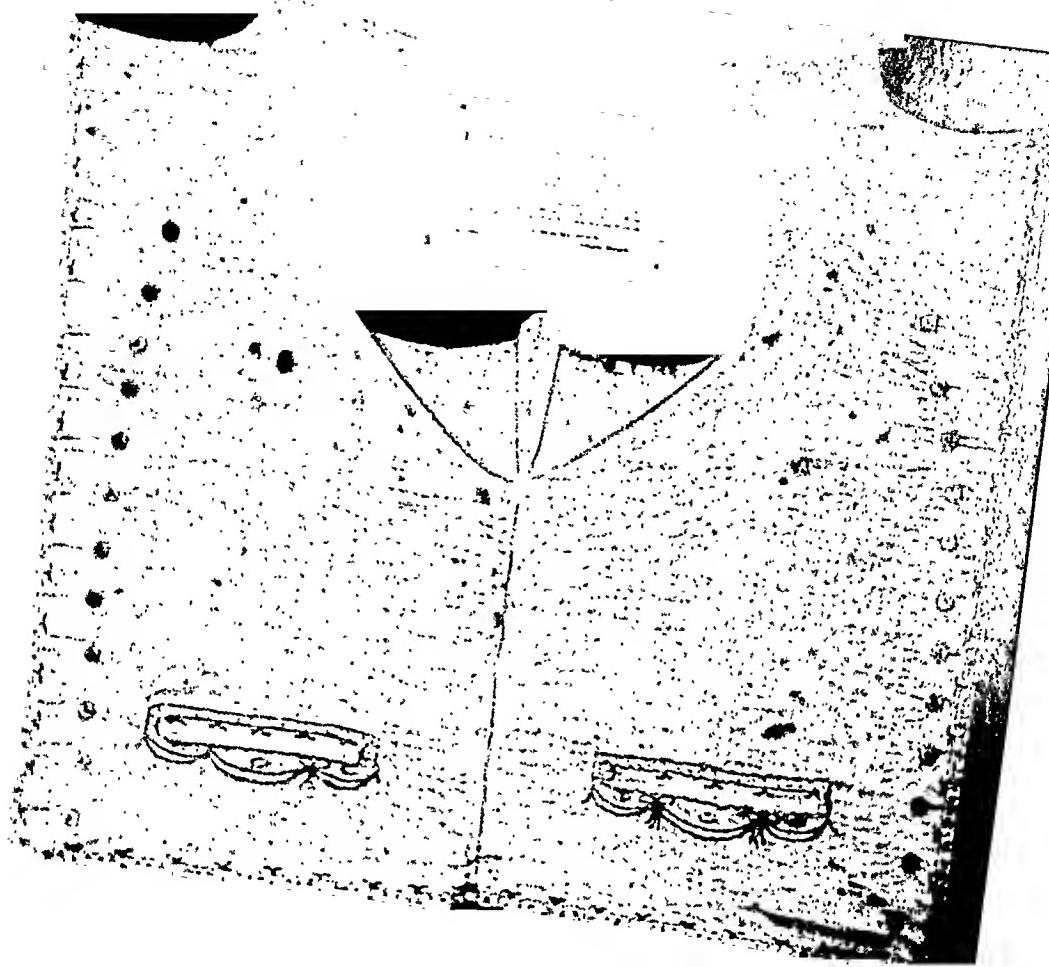
"A movement of this kind may be necessary; but, considering the difficulty of altering the position of the fleet during the time of combat, every endeavour will be made to commence battle with the enemy on the same tack they are; and I have only to recommend and direct that they be fought with at the nearest distance possible, in which getting on board of them may be avoided, which is always disadvantageous to us, except when they are flying.

"The enemy will probably have a convoy of ships carrying troops, which must be disabled by the frigates, or whatever ships are not engaged, or whose signals may be made to attack the convoy, by cutting their masts away and rendering them incapable of escaping during the contest with their fleet."

Nothing of even the minutest details was forgotten. The watch were ordered in fine weather to bring their hammocks on deck with them in the night and to stow them in the nettings, so that if the enemy were suddenly encountered they would have to attend only to the duty on deck, while the watch below cleared the ship for action.

If any ship was seen by her second ahead to drop astern during the night to a greater distance than her station was she must notify it by showing two lights, one over the other, lowered down the stern so that it would not be seen by ships ahead. And if any ship was unable to keep her station those astern were to pass her and take her place.

The flag officers and captains had already been instructed that during a battle in which any of enemy ships should be on fire or badly damaged, and their brigs, tenders, and boats were engaged in saving the lives of the crew, they were not to be fired on or hindered. As long as the battle went on the



*By courtesy of Mr. R. Matheson*

Collingwood's Dress Waistcoat, spotted with port.



British fleet was not to give up the pursuit of such enemy ships as had not surrendered to attend to anything else except to aid an English ship in distress.

Five days later Collingwood learned that the French had left the Adriatic. He turned westward and continued to cruise between Sardinia and Sicily. In spite of Brenton, Coffin, and his own anxious heart there was no battle. In the middle of April a frigate brought news that Ganteaume was back safe within Toulon. He knew the old agony of frustration.



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## FANDANGO

THE Spanish revolt early in the summer of 1808 brought a new interest and a new hope into the French war. Collingwood, who had been second fiddle to Nelson all his life, promptly left for Cadiz to play the same part to Wellington. The French had five ships of the line under Vice-Admiral Rossily in the harbour at Cadiz, and though everybody seemed glad to see Collingwood they declined his help in bringing Rossily to terms. Yet he was glad to find that the Spaniards seemed determined to expel the French from their country and were carrying on their operations "without those horrible scenes which disfigured and disgraced France in her revolution." The French squadron capitulated after being bombarded for two days.

Collingwood did everything the Spaniards would let him do for them, though sometimes they acted with that unaccountable oddity that was always puzzling him in foreigners. The Spaniards made incessant demands upon him for gunpowder, and he gladly gave them all he could spare. He was dumbfounded when he was told that the powder had been fired in honour of a saint whose festival they were celebrating. When it was gone he was asked for more. "I can spare none for saints, only for sinners," he replied pointedly.

Yet on the whole he was satisfied that the Spanish cause and England's were now one. When his officers landed at Cadiz, which they did every day, they were surrounded by crowds saying, "Viva les Ingleses," and "Viva King George."

Everyone wore in his hat a small red cloth cockade with "F.7" (Ferdinand the Seventh) embroidered on it. "They say that hitherto Buonaparte has had only armies to contend with," he told Sarah, "but now he has a nation where every man is a soldier."

The Spanish Junta at Seville and the Governor of Cadiz applied to him for cloth and horses. The need for these was acute. He replied that the English Government would pay for them wherever they were obtained. It was arms and money that they most needed, not men. Of cannon fodder they had an abundance. In every province of Spain the demand for arms, muskets, pistols, and so on was made incessantly and urgently. Collingwood directed that the ships on the coast to the eastward should supply the Spanish with such arms and ammunition as they could, and asked for 2000 muskets to be sent from the armoury at Malta.

The Governor of Majorca was ordered to use all the forges in the country to make twelve-foot-long pikes for the peasants of Valencia and Catalonia. The Spanish army at Saragossa was composed mostly of peasants and officered by priests, who took, he found, a great interest in the war. The Bishop himself headed the army, and with his sword in one hand and the Cross in the other, he fought bravely until he was shot in the arm. Collingwood was so satisfied with the conduct of these allies that he took it upon himself to raise £20,000 at Gibraltar on behalf of Spain and drew bills for this amount on the English Treasury.

The Spanish flattered him with their attentions when he went on shore. He was received with all military honours, and 40,000 of the inhabitants, men and women, came to welcome him. The volunteer brigade was turned out in his honour and all the officers for miles around were assembled. The cavalry had to clear the streets for him to go through. The city resounded with the cry of "Viva Collingwood." He was given a collation at the Governor's, and visited Madame

Apodaca, wife of one of the Spanish admirals. He found her "a genteel woman, about thirty-five, which is reckoned tolerably old here."

Later, the Governor gave the English squadron a "most magnificent entertainment." It was specially notable for its exclusiveness. No one was there but persons "of the first rank." They went to the opera, which was in gala for the occasion. Nothing could have been more gratifying than his reception. The audience clapped for a quarter of an hour when he went into the Governor's box, and every mark of attention that was possible was paid to him. He luxuriated in the flattery.

The English Cabinet gave him full support. Mulgrave, in a letter on their behalf wrote : "I could not add any suggestions to the judicious measures which you have uniformly taken. They are strictly conformable to the wishes and views of His Majesty's Government. . . . I feel most highly gratified in considering that the establishment of that confidence and the encouragement in their efforts will depend as much upon the exertion of your lordship's talents and zeal and shall be happy to hear that your health has not suffered from the anxious vigilance which you have had to exercise for so many months."

Castlereagh, still adamant in his refusal to alter the terms of Collingwood's peerage, wrote that his despatches had been laid before the King and were entirely approved. Even Collingwood's finicking passion for detail was praised. "I am to express the satisfaction which His Majesty's Ministers feel," Castlereagh declared, "from your descending to minute particulars and anecdotes which throw much light upon the state of the public mind and give great assistance to His Majesty's Government in forming their opinions; and I trust that your lordship will not discontinue communications of so interesting a nature."

But his old bugbear, the blockading of Toulon, could not

be escaped. In the autumn he went back to watch that stormy coast. The service, he thought, was not practicable, but that was something which those on shore did not seem able to comprehend. The strain of worry, after the pleasant flattery of Cadiz, crippled his mind once more. He knew that the French had a large force ready for sea at Toulon, but in the gales that threatened to wear out both men and ships he could get no intelligence of them.

The French frigates came out in one storm and were chased by his ships, but they got in again. It was a double sort of game he had to play—watching the French with one eye while with the other he directed the assistance to be given to Spain. The conduct of the fleet alone would have been easy, he admitted to Sarah, but the political correspondence he had to carry on with the Spaniards, the Turks, the Albanians, the Egyptians, and all the states of Barbary gave him such constant occupation that he felt his spirits exhausted and his health much impaired. But if he must go on he would do the best he could.

## THE GRANITE WEATHERS

**T**HE spirit might be willing but the flesh was weak. The storms to which it had been subjected were causing the granite of his constitution to crumble. The gastric trouble of which he had complained for so long now made rapid inroads. His body wasted palpably. His strength departed. His only exercise was to push a pen across endless sheets of paper—he who had revelled in felling trees, digging man-sized trenches, and tramping the hills and glens of Northumberland to plant oaks in the hedges. The things he needed, rest, exercise, and a dietary as different as could be from the weevilly biscuits, the salt pork, and lack of vegetables of shipboard, were denied him. He sank visibly. Those about him were alarmed. His decline was common knowledge both in the fleet and at home. Everyone who knew him was disturbed—except the Admiralty and Sarah. She was guilty of conduct which outraged her uncle, the Rev. H. Blackett.

"I am sorry Lady Collingwood is gone to Brighton," the clergyman wrote to Sarah's father in July, 1808, "in the situation her husband is at present she had, I think, better not have chosen the most public of them all. . . . It shows too great a fondness for popularity and is enough to turn the heads of the girls, and I am sure it would have pleased Lord Collingwood more to hear that they were at a less public place than that they were at the Prince's ball and danced with such a lord. I hear Lord Collingwood is very weak and ill."

complaints in his stomach. He must soon come home and will be ordered to Bath, and will not be able to come to Chirton this autumn or winter. After being so long in a hot climate the cold northern blasts here would not agree with his constitution."

It was borne in upon Collingwood that, weak and nervous as he was, the service required more strength of mind and body than he could give it, and he wrote to the Admiralty begging to be relieved from the command, "for such time as will be necessary to restore my health and strength in England." It was repugnant to him to ask to quit his station, but he hoped that their lordships would be satisfied that his request was prompted by "the same sense of public duty which made me formerly desire to serve."

The Government were not pleased with his letter. They would be seriously inconvenienced, they replied, if he suspended the exertion of his "zeal and talents." It was, they declared, a justice they owed to him and the country to tell him candidly that they did not know how they would be able "to supply all that would be lost to the service of the country, and to the general interests of Europe," if he were to absent himself from the Mediterranean. In a later letter the "delicacy, difficulty, and importance" of the duties of his command were acknowledged and he was offered, "if the Mediterranean should no longer be consistent with the material consideration of your lordship's health," the command at Plymouth—"centre and spring of the most active points of naval operations."

He read the letter over and fear chilled him. Did the Admiralty think he was shrinking from his duty? He hastened to protest that his "best service" was due to his country as long as he lived, and he left "all else to your lordships' consideration and convenience." Yet his life at sea had been a long one, and an anxious one also for a mind that never engaged in anything with indifference. He

he said, "any particular illness," but he was weak and languid and often found himself "too much disordered" to make the exertions he wished to perform and which the situation, he thought, required. Their lordships smiled and left him to rot in his ships.

On November 1 he wrote to the Government that he had been indifferent lately, growing very weak and infirm in his limbs, worn out, he believed, by the weight of his years, but he hoped, if God willed, to keep the complaint out of his head a little longer. He assured Sarah that he had no "fever or a dyspepsy." "Do you know what a dyspepsy is?" he asked. "I'll tell you. It is the disease of officers who have grown tired and then they get invalided for dyspepsy. I had not this complaint, but my mind was worn by continual fatigue. I felt a consciousness that my faculties were weakened by application and saw no prospect of respite. . . . I applied for leave to be returned to you, to be cherished and restored."

He had, indeed, only another year of life left to him. These last twelve months were darkened by an unfortunate quarrel with his father-in-law, Mr. J. E. Blackett. His lifelong tendency towards economical carefulness had by now degenerated into miserliness. He regarded himself as a poor man, whose little pile of savings were in danger of being filched from him by the extravagance of those at home. His sister Mary seems to have implanted in his mind the notion that Sarah, the girls, and her father were living far beyond his means at Chirton. They were entertaining lavishly at the manor house. A great deal of what he thought was unnecessary expense was being incurred there. Recently he had suffered a number of pinpricks at Blackett's hands.

Collingwood believed that he was interfering unduly in his affairs, and was offended by what he thought was his father-in-law's "officiousness." Now he hinted that Collingwood should do something to support one of his daughters, a Mrs. Stead, whose husband had not done well in business.

Collingwood promptly replied that if Blackett wished his daughter to have luxuries he ought to have made her an adequate settlement upon her marriage. Suddenly in the early part of March, 1809, a demand was made upon Blackett for £2200. He went to Sarah and prevailed on her, after a good deal of argument, to draw on her husband's bankers for this sum, in return for which he made over his shares in a fire insurance business.

Collingwood was outraged. He wrote to Sarah telling her he entirely disapproved of his being engaged in anybody's business but his own ; that it was his duty to take care of his daughters ; that he would have nothing to do with the fire office, and that the money her father had withdrawn must be replaced. He wrote Mr. Blackett "an exceedingly plain" letter reproving him for the liberty he had taken with his money. He read him such a lecture as he guessed he had never had before.

From his ship he appointed an independent agent to collect for him the rents due from the Chirton Estate. The agent was to send him twice a year an account of the net receipts and to deliver to his brother each six months an account. He was to send all the money he collected direct to Collingwood's bankers and was to have no dealings of any sort with Sarah or Blackett. No money was to be paid to any of the tradesmen at Shields for goods supplied to his family. His bankers were instructed that Sarah and the girls were to have a fixed allowance. Beyond that they were not to honour any bills drawn by them on his account. Yet he loved Sarah too dearly to be angry with her for long. It was her father who was to blame and no one else.

"I am sorry for the derangement—for I call it derangement where there is no order—of my house," he told his sister in July, 1809. "It is what gives me great pain. I have endeavoured to restrain it. My wife would gladly confine herself to what I prescribe, but the gaiety, the vanity,

love of feeding of her father there is no bounds to. It has been the habit of his life, and the means, I am afraid, has never been of much consideration. I know she resisted as much as possible drawing of that money, and got Mr. Pearson to reason with him on the impropriety of it, but at last was obliged to yield to importunity. I have told them how ill I take it that any person, either my wife or any other, should suppose that they had the control over my fortune; that I have now sent orders to Mr. Newton to receive everything due to me at Chirton and Shields: he is neither to pay a bill to any person on account of Chirton House nor to render any account but to myself. . . . My wife is to draw bills in her own name on Martins, Stone, and Company for the sum I have allotted. If she exceeds that sum the bills will not be received. I have left them nothing to do but look after themselves."

The matter was still rankling in his mind in August. "I believe that Mr. Blackett would have as little hesitation in spending my income as his own," he confided to his sister. "I have avoided authorising him to take any part in my affairs. . . . I endeavour to think as little as possible of home. The idea of it on my mind has entirely weaned me of any desire to return. . . . I feel humbled in my house being made the place of assemble for every Jack that wants a dinner. Such want of selection insults my pride and I shall never join it. . . . What a thing it is to have bills sent to my bankers refused payment. I consider myself as quite disgraced."

Now, however, that the thing had happened he was resolved that the bailiffs should enter his home and levy on his furniture rather than indulge the extravagances of those who would be free with his money.

By October he had so far forgiven Sarah as to send her a present of a silk shawl from Sicily, but his anger still simmered against Blackett. "The more I examine the thing," he exclaimed on November 25, "the more reason I have to be

dissatisfied with the advantage taken of my wife's want of knowledge of those matters. . . . I had a letter from Mrs. Stead. I am afraid they are getting embarrassed. He is gay and expensive. At Malta they say that the King has expressed his desire that I may not be recalled. . . . I dare say he is unwilling that an insurance broker should sit in his House of Peers. My character is established as a mercantile jobber."

With all this worry on top of his unremitting work he became weak and languid, but he still whipped up enough energy to keep both the fleet and the Spaniards up to scratch. He saw to it that the fleet was complete in all things during the autumn storms and from his ship spurred on his sluggish allies.

"The Spaniards are very languid in Catalonia," he lamented, "I brush them up, but they are not the brighter for it." His eyes were weaker and his limbs more feeble. He was racked with worry throughout the winter. Arguments would not rouse the Spanish army. He wished them to raise the siege at Gerona, but they would not move. They bewildered him with a host of excuses. They were ill-armed, they said. They had no provisions. They were without clothes. In short, they would not come. He pointed out to the Captain-General what must be the consequence of delay. Catalonia would be lost if the siege were not raised. The town was besieged, he pointed out, "by a gang of Italians who were ready to run away if attacked."

He remained off Toulon so that no aid should be sent from there. The storms were unceasing. His ship, the *Ocean*, was on the point of going to pieces. She was bolted with copper, but she would never be good for anything, he thought, until she had been docked in England and secured with iron. Copper bolting he condemned as an "ill-judged" experiment of the Naval Surveyors.

He wrote "so harshly but so truly" on this point to the Admiralty and the Naval Board that he thought they would

be displeased with his freedom, but if his letter was the means of correcting "what to a scientific mind must be wrong" he would be satisfied and was prepared to bear any little resentment with patience. His opinion was given "on behalf of England whose existence depends upon her navy—bad the French devised a plan for its destruction they could not have devised a more effectual one." He replaced the copper bolts with iron ones.

Melancholy afflicted him. Whenever he landed—if he ever did—he would come to a country of strangers, knowing no one and unknown to all except his own family. One thing only interested him in his estate at Chirton—that no one should be removed from any house or farm "unless his conduct has made him very obnoxious." It was to the interest of a tenant to give a fair rent, and when he did that it was shameful to subject him to a higher bidder.

He who never entertained, who went to no feasts or festivals or midnight gambols, believed he had no physical complaints but those arising from sheer fatigue of spirits. His time was so occupied that even the common visits of civility were inconvenient to him. Malta he found the "most gossiping, gormandising place I ever heard of."

In two years the war had made the Maltese merchants exceedingly rich. Some, he heard, had made £100,000, others now had incomes of from ten to fifteen thousand pounds a year. Their women, who before had done the humblest of their domestic duties themselves, now vied with each other in all the shining finery of tassel and tinsel and passed their nights in routs and revels. Their days were spent in idleness. The Puritan commander saw just enough of the island to know that it would not do for him. Neither his health nor his occupations were suited to it. He declined all invitations.

As soon as his ship was repaired he went to Sicily, where he was not so stand-offish. "I had long promised myself the

pleasure of paying my compliments to the King and Queen," he told Sarah, "and I gratified a curiosity which had been excited by many strange stories I had heard. I arrived the day before Ash Wednesday, the last of the Carnival, when the Queen gave a grand ball and supper to the nobility. I received an invitation as soon as we had anchored and was glad of an opportunity to see all the Court and those far-famed Princesses at once. The King has much the appearance and manner of a worthy, honest country gentleman. Nature certainly intended him for that state, but blundering Chance has cast his lot awry. The Queen would appear to be penetrating into the soul and mind of everybody that comes near her. She would be thought a deep politician, yet all her schemes miscarry. She broods over what is impracticable with her little means, and frets herself continually that others are not as dim-sighted as herself. Her lot also has been cast awry, or, in the distribution of stations for this world so loose a morality and such depravity of manners would never have been found perched upon a throne, from whence should issue the bright example of all that is good and great.

"The King lives generally in the country, about four miles from the city, where he amuses himself in planting trees and shooting. We dined with him on Sunday at his country house and he carried us all over it. It is the prettiest thing that can be ; the rooms not larger than ours at Morpeth and the house not much bigger. We went over his grounds ; and His Majesty seemed particularly desirous that I should see all his improvements when I told him I was a great planter myself.

"I have also seen a great deal of the Princesses and Duchesses of Sicily ; and all I shall say of them is, that the more I see of them the more I bless my stars that I was born in England and have got a darling wife who is not a princess. There were very polite and attentive to me. I believe the Queen was relieved when I took leave of her. . . . They never desire, I am sure, to see my face again."

The conclusion he formed about Sicilian society was that a woman would always be a nobody on the island unless she painted her face and intrigued by moonlight. The Queen was a handful. If ever his ships sailed out of sight she raised a cry that the island was being abandoned. Yet to keep his squadron in port to please her was to allow the French to do as they like unmolested. The Queen was so apprehensive that it would have taken a squadron in every port to have given her a sense of security.

Only the women of Spain, it seemed, had any good in them. He heard that in besieged Gerona there was a company of fighting women, two hundred strong, known as the company of Santa Barbara. They were armed and did duty with the garrison. Their commander was a Lady of Fashion and the officers were all women of quality. The troop of Amazons was distinguished for its gallantry. He wished that the women of all nations were like them.

In March, 1809, he was appointed Major-General of Marines and shortly afterwards changed his ship for the *Ville de Paris*, newly arrived from England. He rated her the best ship in the Navy. A model of this vessel, made out of their beef bones by French prisoners of war at Portsmouth, is in the entrance hall of Trinity House, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Fine ship though she was he would have been satisfied with any that sailed well and was strong. He saw little of the vessels that carried him, for he seldom moved from his desk. What he wanted was a new pair of legs and a new pair of eyes. His eyesight was failing rapidly and his feet swelled so much every day that he thought they could not last long. He was afflicted during his working hours by headache and at night by cramp. He complained to Blackett that he no longer had the power of mind needed to conduct so arduous a machine as the service had become. He gave it all his time and strength, working from daylight until midnight, often borrowing an hour or two from the next day, and still had scarcely time in

which to eat his scanty dinner. Tough as he was he could not last much longer. He had seen all his ships and men out two and even three times. An added blow was the loss of Bounce—washed overboard in the night and drowned. He alone had stood his ground.

## HIS LAST FIGHT

**H**E had scarcely settled himself in the *Ville de Paris* when a message from Spain informed him that a French squadron had been seen off Barcelona. He steered at once to intercept them on their return. Next day two French ships carrying invalid soldiers from Barcelona were captured and from them he learned that the squadron was already back in Toulon. He had crossed their route two hours before them. He raced to Toulon and found the enemy safe in port. He had an "artful, deceptious, and timid foe to deal with." They were as "secret as the night and ingenious in devices." Yet he hoped that his perseverance would be rewarded.

He determined to concentrate on the Adriatic so as to prevent Italy being invaded from the sea and to protect allied transports to points where their force was most wanted. The squadron was instructed to co-operate with the Austrians and also with the Pacha of Albania. He ordered his commanders to land frequently, alarm the countryside, and destroy all cannon defending the coast. He hoped in this way to draw the attention of the enemy away from the theatre in which a British expeditionary force, sent out from Sicily, would be likely to operate.

Two ships were sent to the coast of Tuscany for the same purpose. The move was successful. Within two months seven forts, castles, or garrisons were taken. Scaling towers at midnight and storming redoubts at midday became familiar

occurrences. The method of attack was to float on launches a carronade inshore and rake the coast with the support of a sharp fire of grape and musketry from the jolly boats. Eager youths were placed in charge of these operations and they seldom failed.

The *Spartan*, *Amphion*, and some other ships took and blew up three fortified places. The *Seahorse* and the *Halcyon* brig captured two small islands strongly fortified. The *Alceste* and *Cyane* accounted for three towers by escalade at midnight. And the *Scout*, not to be behindhand, divided its force, and making a brisk attack from front and rear simultaneously stormed a French work and brought seven vessels out of the port. Such activity and zeal in his young men kept up Collingwood's flagging spirits.

But bigger game had been scented. The French in Toulon had a squadron of thirteen sail of the line and seven frigates ready for action. Collingwood had from nine to eleven men-of-war and one frigate. On June 30 he learned that the French were low in the water—a sign that they were prepared for battle. He waited and waited and went on waiting. He had need of all his perseverance. July passed and August. September came and went. The old bulldog was not to be shaken off. He guessed that France would have sooner or later to supply Barcelona with provisions and that while he lay off Toulon they would not attempt it. He kept the French bottled up in Toulon until Barcelona's plight was desperate. Then he feinted.

After the first of the autumn gales he retired to Minorca and sent a number of ships into harbour, where they stayed just long enough to seem settled and for the news to reach Toulon. Then he called them out and posted himself at Cape Sebastian, where frigates he had stationed at Toulon were ordered to race to him with news if and when the French squadron sailed.

At 9 p.m., Sunday, October 22, the *Pomone* came to him

with the alarm. The Toulon squadron was out. Everyone was in raptures. Collingwood hoped the whole French fleet was at sea, but his "timid and deceptious foe" were to disappoint him yet again. He signalled to the fleet that the enemy were near and to clear for action. As soon as it was daylight he signalled to prepare for action and for every ship to bend her sprit sail. The *Volontaire* first saw the enemy approaching. An hour later they could be seen from the masthead. They were a meagre lot—only one Rear-Admiral with three sail of the line, two frigates, some other "armed things," and a convoy of about twenty vessels.

The *Pomone* signalled that the French were dispersing and asked if she should destroy them. There was only one answer to that and he replied, Yes. He ordered four ships to give chase. The *Pomone* got close to the French and burned five ships of the convoy, but the others were kept back by shifts of wind, for the weather was unsettled and very hazy. Day turned to night and he thought he had lost them. Mist and rain, driven by a fresh wind, swirled across the fleets. He kept to a larboard tack and telegraphed that whichever ship had the French in sight should burn a false fire every thirty minutes. No fire was burned.

Next day the weather was very thick. He caught sight of five of his ships on the lee bow. They tacked to the northward and in a short while he had lost sight of them. He stood to the northward all day without seeing friend or foe. On the 25th, when west of Sebastiania, the weather became "squally, unsettled, and ill-looking." Twenty-four hours later he was joined by the *Apollo* and heard she had fallen in with six sail, four of the line, and two frigates, which were assumed to be enemy craft. Shortly afterwards the *Pomone* reported having burned five of the enemy's convoy, about 800 tons in all, laden with bread, wheat, and flour. His last fight had resolved itself into a game of hide-and-seek, but it ended better than it promised.

Admiral Martin's division fell in with the flying French in the Gulf of Lyons where he chased them on shore. The French Admiral set fire to his own ship, the *Robuste*, of eighty guns, while two seventy-fours, the *Lion* and the *Boree*, with one of the frigates, ran on shore at Cette. A week later Collingwood burned the rest of the convoy, which had escaped into Rosas Bay. The attack was a highly spirited one. Five armed ships with vessels moored amongst them under the protection of the castle and strong batteries were boarded by the English boats. They were quickly carried by the English seamen, sword in hand, and set on fire. Collingwood lost in the action sixteen men and had between fifty and sixty wounded. Most of the enemy crews were blown up in their own ships. His plan had succeeded "to a marvel," almost, he boasted, "without a hair on anybody's head being hurt and almost without a shot being fired."

It was his last engagement. His fighting days were over. In a few more months he was dead.

## HALF MAST

**T**HE *Ville de Paris* put into Minorca and immediately the commander-in-chief took to his bed. His decline now was progressive and still there was no slackening in the work he was called upon to do. He grudged the time he snatched to eat his miserable dinner. But for the fact that he needed every unit of strength he would have avoided eating altogether. The pain in his stomach was so severe that it was agony to eat. It was high time that he returned to England. Otherwise it would soon be too late. He was advised by his doctor when he landed on the island to try horse-riding, but the exercise was too violent.

He stuck it out until February, 1810. On the 22nd he wrote to the Admiralty resigning his command. "This I can assure your Lordships," he wrote, "I have not done until I was past service, being at present totally incapable of applying to the details of my office. My complaint is of a nature to which I apprehend it is difficult to apply a remedy, for I have hitherto received no benefit from medical advice. Since November it has been daily increasing so that I am now almost past walking across my cabin, and as it is attributed to my long service in a ship I have little hope of amendment until I can land." He was reduced to dictating his letters. Even the hand that had flown across so many reams of paper and gripped a sword with so much zest failed him.

Rear-Admiral Martin took over the command on March 3 and Collingwood left for England in the *Ville de Paris*. He wrote to his brother desiring that Sarah and the girls should go up to London and await his coming. He had warned Clavell before Trafalgar to prepare himself for the surgeon's

knife and he did not spare himself now. He ordered that lead should be brought on board to make him a coffin. Then the *Ville de Paris* left for England. The ship was two days in getting out of Port Mahon. It was sunset on the 6th before they were clear of the harbour.

"We are on the high seas once more," he was told, and his haggard face brightened for a moment. "Then I may yet live to meet the French once more," he murmured. Next day the *Ville de Paris* rolled biliously in a heavy swell. Captain Thomas hastened to Collingwood's cabin to enquire if the staggering of the ship was disturbing him. "No, Thomas," he replied. "I am now in a state in which nothing in this world can disturb me any more. I am dying. And I am sure it must console you and all who love me to see how comfortably I am arriving at my end."

The granite body was crumbling and dissolving, but the spirit of the living rock was unimpaired. Mr. Macanst, the ship's surgeon, looked at the dying man with admiring wonder. The doctor knew what agony his patient was enduring. He could give him no relief. Yet he heard no sigh from the bed. The old Puritan was meeting death with a fortitude and stoical composure that the doctor had seldom seen equalled and never surpassed.

Collingwood, only a collection of bones in a blue-veined bag of skin, lay back on the pillows in a reverie. The lids dropped over his staring eyes. Now and again he moistened with his tongue his parched lips. The ironic gods who had cheated him so long now cheated him in the manner of his death. If only he could have died in battle . . . or at home with Sarah and his girls. He could hear the Wansbeck surging over its stony bed beneath his window.

The first hint of spring would be appearing in his beloved trees. He was dying as he had lived, away from the smell of the good earth, lost in a waste of ocean. His mind went back through the years. He recalled Trafalgar and Nelson and

the help he had given his friend at Cape St. Vincent. Perhaps that had been the dearest moment in his life. . . . Or was it when his pair of medals had arrived and he knew he had beaten Howe? . . . Ushant—it had been a great fight, but his mouth was still bitter with the taste it had left in it. . . . What a friend Nelson had been. . . . How they and Wilfrid had enjoyed their operations in the West Indies. . . . Why had he not been chosen for the Nile? He would have gladly given these last years of his life to have been there with Nelson. How would the fleet fare when he was gone? Would the cat rule once more and the snotties bully his men? Would Martin be as scrupulous as he had been over the seamen's health? . . . How long would the army be in beating that gipsy, Napoleon? . . .

Earlier memories flooded his mind. He thought of Mr. Moises and his birch and the tall brick house in The Side that had been his home and the plum cake his mother had given him to take to sea. What a shy little boy he had been in those days. And the glazed hats and gold ear-rings of the seafaring men on the quayside who had enticed his mind from Terence and Longinus. . . . And his uncle's sword and queue and cocked hat. . . . And Roddam and his first meeting with Sarah—dear, bonny Sarah, how he loved her, how he had always loved her. He wished he could be with her now. Had he been more at home he would have had sons to follow him. His name was to die out. Even a family had been denied him by the country for whom he had given his life. . . .

He awoke from his reverie at six o'clock that evening. His strength had gone, but his mind was clear. He made a death-bed speech completely in character. "I have reviewed the actions of my past life," he murmured, "and I am happy to say that nothing gives me a moment's uneasiness." He said good-bye in turn to all his attendants who crowded round his bed and then quietly died.

## AFTERWARDS

THE lead coffin was transferred at Gibraltar from the *Ville de Paris* to the *Nereus* frigate and taken to Sheerness, where it was put on board the Commissioners' frigate and brought up the river to Greenwich. The ships fired a salute of twenty-one guns. The body lay in state for some days at Greenwich Hospital and on May 11, 1810, Collingwood was buried close to Nelson in St. Paul's.

The authorities rummaged in the attics of Windsor Castle and unearthed a stone coffin that had originally been designed for Cardinal Wolsey. This the King presented to Sarah. Twelve veterans bore the coffin and eight officers the pall, for which his flag was made to serve. Slowly the cortège shuffled out of the Great Hall at Greenwich Hospital to the gates of the College between five hundred pensioners drawn up in two lines. The chaplain in attendance was followed by four wounded officers and eight lieutenants, Lord Hood, and the Lieutenant-Governor. The hearse on its journey from the College gates to St. Paul's was preceded by the Banner of England.

A glittering congregation had gathered in the Cathedral. Lord Grey was there with Lord St. Vincent, Lord Mulgrave, Lord Cochrane, Admiral Harvey, Sir Peter Parker, and about thirty more admirals and captains who had served under Collingwood. Lord Chancellor Eldon found the service particularly affecting. A crowd of sailors gathered round the coffin on which Smith, the old servant who had been with

Collingwood for more than eleven years, had placed his master's coronet. As Eldon shouldered his way through the throng, a veteran seized his arm and entreated the Lord Chancellor to take him in that he might be with Collingwood to the end. Eldon told the seaman to stick fast to him and he would take him in, but when the words "dust unto dust" were recited and earth was thrown upon the coffin, the sailor burst past him and threw himself into the vault. The lawyer was deeply touched.

Only the Duke of Clarence was not there, and he made full amends for his absence. "Madam," he wrote to Sarah from Bushy House, "I this morning received a mourning ring in memory of the deceased Lord Collingwood, which, of course, I owe to your Ladyship's politeness and attention. No one can regret the melancholy event of the death of his Lordship more sincerely than I do; and I feel great concern in having been prevented from attending his funeral. I was informed that the interment was to be private, or else I should have made a point of attending the remains of my departed friend to the grave. No one could have had a more sincere regard for the public character and abilities of Lord Collingwood than myself: indeed, with me it is enough to have been the friend of Nelson, to possess my estimation. The Hero of the Nile, who fell at Trafalgar, was a man of great mind, but self-taught: Lord Collingwood, the old companion in arms of the immortal Nelson, was equally great in judgment and abilities, and had also the advantage of an excellent education.

"Pardon me, Madam, for having said so much on this melancholy occasion; but my feelings as a brother officer, and my admiration for the late Lord Collingwood, have dictated this expression of my sentiments. I will now conclude, and shall place on the same finger the ring which your Ladyship has sent me, with a gold bust of Lord Nelson. Lord Collingwood's must ever be prized by me as coming

from his family ; the bust of Lord Nelson I received from an unknown hand on the day the event of his death reached this country. To me the two rings are invaluable ; and the sight of them must ever give me sensations of grief and admiration."

It had been a brilliant occasion. England had done him proud. Now she could afford to forget. But from time to time her conscience, pricked chiefly by a man whom Collingwood had never known but who wished to have what the Admiral in his lifetime had been denied, stirred uneasily. There was some delay before Parliament saw fit to approve the erection of a monument to Collingwood in St. Paul's. His Puritanically plain tomb contrasts sharply with the elaborate magnificence of those of Nelson and Wellington, its neighbours.

The merchants of Newcastle-on-Tyne were even more tardy. Had they not, after Trafalgar, presented him with a silver kettle costing them one hundred and fifty guineas ? A living donkey was better than a dead lion. They could see no justification for spending more money on Collingwood. It was left to Sarah and the girls to erect a cenotaph to his memory in St. Nicholas' Cathedral, in whose font he had been baptised and at whose altar he had been married. The defection of the citizens of his native town at least gave the widowed Sarah the opportunity of writing an epitaph to her own liking. A great deal of time and attention was spent on this before the draft was finally approved. Post-mortem flattery could scarcely go further :

“ SACRED TO THE MEMORY of  
VICE-ADMIRAL CUTHBERT BARON COLLINGWOOD (the inscription  
read), who was born in the Town, on the 26th September,  
1750,\* OF AN ANCIENT FAMILY.

“ He served with great bravery in the Action of the 1st of  
June, 1794 ; and bore a distinguished part in THE VICTORY  
OFF CAPE ST. VINCENT.

\* Sarah's error. Collingwood was born in 1743.

"In the GREAT BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR he led the British Squadrons into Action, and advanced with his single Ship into the midst of the Combined Fleets of France and Spain. On that day, after the Death of his Illustrious Commander and Friend LORD NELSON, he completed the most glorious and decisive Victory which is recorded in the Naval Annals of the World.

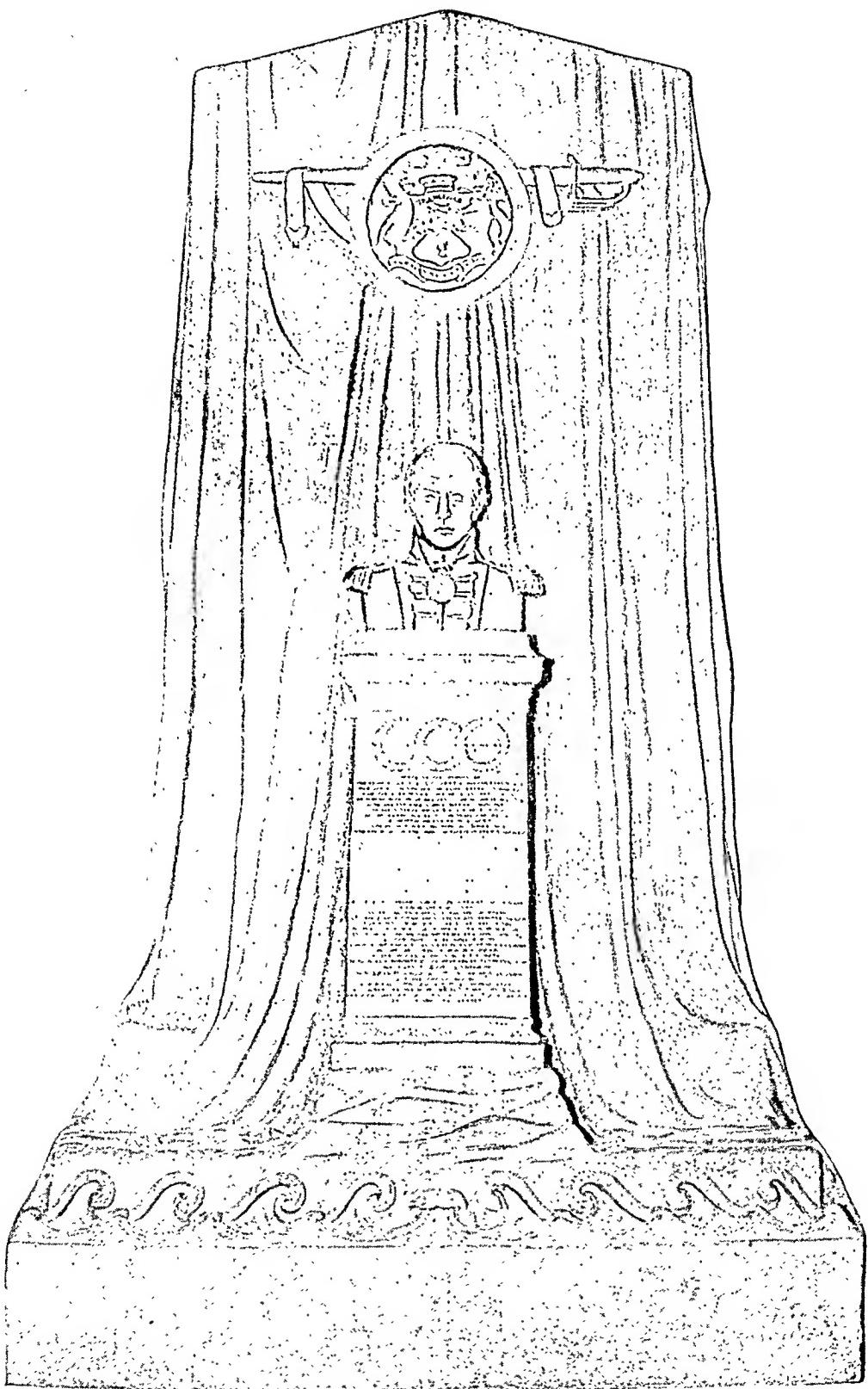
"In the Command of the Mediterranean to which he succeeded, he displayed unrivalled skill as a Seaman, and great talents and address in the conduct of many important Negotiations.

"After Five Years, during which he never quitted his Ship for a single night, he became anxious to revisit his Native Land; but being informed that his service could ill be spared in those critical times, he replied, that HIS LIFE WAS HIS COUNTRY'S, and persevered in the discharge of his arduous Duties, till, exhausted with fatigue, he expired, on board His Majesty's Ship the Ville de Paris on the 7th March, 1810, in the 60th year of his age.

"In Private Life he was generous and affectionate—a pious, just, and exemplary Man. A Monument was erected to his Memory by Parliament, in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, where he lies by the side of the hero to whom he so worthily succeeded in the Victory of Trafalgar.

"His Widow (daughter of John Erasmus Blackett, Esq., of this Town), and his two Daughters, had caused this Cenotaph to be erected; and on Lady Collingwood's death, on the 17th September, 1819, it was inscribed to both their revered and lamented Parents, by their grateful children."

Everything had been done that a grateful and thrifty nation felt to be right. There seemed to be no reason why Collingwood should ever afterwards be remembered. But the nation had reckoned without Mr. G. L. Newnham, an obscure barrister, who found employment, when at last Napoleon was



*From a photograph by R. Johnston*

Collingwood's Cenotaph in St. Nicholas's Cathedral,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



eating out his heart on St. Helena, settling the war claims of British subjects against the French. Somehow he met and married Collingwood's elder daughter, Sarah.

Vast masses of the dead Admiral's correspondence had been preserved and came into his hands. Skimming these with his clerk's eye he learned of Collingwood's passionate desire that his peerage should be perpetuated. It was a notion that intrigued the lawyer. He gathered together the enormous piles of yellowing letters and retired with them and his wife into the country. He would justify the dead man to the authorities and reap the reward himself.

For years he laboured editing the letters and preparing a memoir of the man he had never known. He embalmed and canonised him with all the passionate moral fervour of the early nineteenth century. His lively pen struck and struck through the letters. Every phrase that showed a slipping from a pillar of rectitude as high as that of St. Simeon Stylites vanished. A halo of garish colours was painted round the head of the hard-bitten sailor. It was not a portrait that Newnham produced, but a figure in stained glass—and the art of staining glass had been lost for centuries. So enthusiastic did the labouring son-in-law become, that he took Collingwood's name for his own.

At last the masterpiece was ready and given to the world. It was dedicated to the Duke of Clarence. Surely his Royal Highness could not read without being moved to tears—and to action? Newnham waited eagerly for the announcement that he had been raised to the peerage as Baron Collingwood, the title that had become extinct on the death of his father-in-law.

The Duke of Clarence went to the throne as William IV. Edition succeeded edition of Newnham's book. Was the King never going to do the decent thing? It seemed he was as adamant as the insufferable Castlereagh who had rejected all Collingwood's pleas. The King died without Newnham's

wish being gratified. The erstwhile lawyer shrugged his shoulders and gave up the ghost.

One thing only his book had done. It had troubled the conscience of Tyneside. The merchants there began to fear, as they looked with fresh eyes upon the picture Newnham had thrust before them, that they had been just a little parsimonious. It might be fitting after all to raise a monument to the dead man.

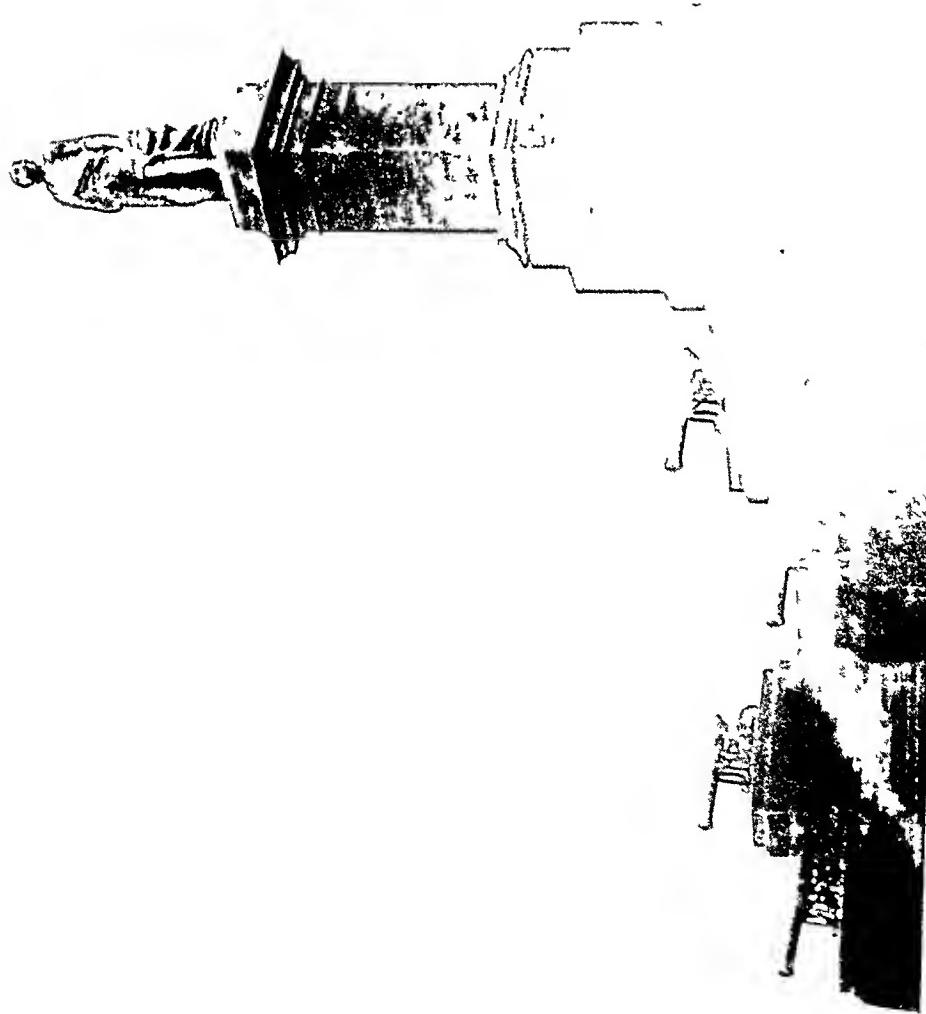
The proposal was first made at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1838—twenty-eight years after Collingwood's death—at a meeting presided over by Admiral Sir Charles Ogle. The question before the gathering was the "propriety" of such a monument. The citizens were by no means enthusiastic and the proposal hung fire.

Two more years passed before anything was achieved. Then it was decided that the Northumbrian sculptor Lough should be commissioned to execute a monument. Subscriptions were slow in coming. Many were the feuds and disputes which the site and nature of the statue aroused. At last the Duke of Northumberland presented the fund with a donation of £500 and a site for the monument overlooking the Tyne's mouth. Lough brought forth his work. It proved to be a statue in thirteen pieces, weighing thirty tons, and measuring twenty-one feet in height. It was placed upon a pedestal forty-five feet in height. A steep flight of steps on the south and north sides led to the base of the plinth, and above these, on the south side, overlooking from a good height, the shipping of the Tyne, the busy port of South Shields and far off Frenchman's Bay, an inscription was placed :

"This monument was erected by public subscription to Admiral Lord Collingwood, who in the *Royal Sovereign* on the 21st of October, 1805, led the British fleet into action at Trafalgar and sustained the sea fight for upwards of an hour before the other ships were within gunshot, which caused

*From a photograph by R. Johnston*

Lough's Monument at Tynemouth, with the guns from the Royal Sovereign.





Nelson to exclaim : ‘ See how that noble fellow Collingwood takes his ship into action.’

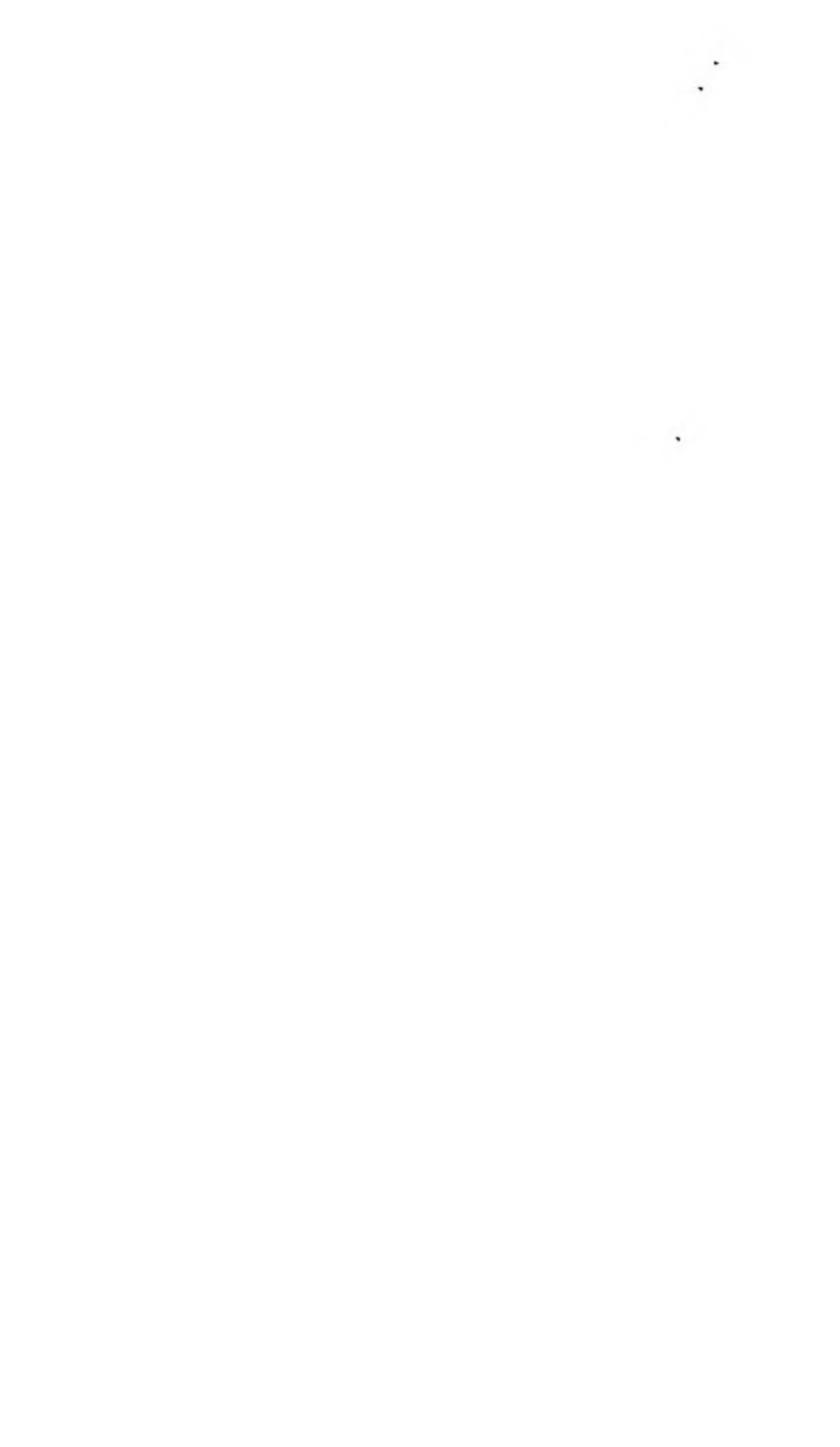
“ He was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1748 and died in the service of his country, on board the *Ville de Paris*, on 7th March, 1810, and was buried at St. Paul’s Cathedral.”

Could anything more be done ? Two years later the citizens of the Tyne were pleased to embellish their effort. Four guns from the *Royal Sovereign*, duly certified as authentic, were brought to Shields and mounted and placed on the monument. Tyneside was very proud of this memorial.

About this time in the South of England Collingwood’s elder daughter, Newnham’s wife—her sister, Mary Patience, had died in 1822 after marrying Mr. Anthony Denny—was living in eccentric retirement. She had only a blurred memory of the grim father who had led her through a churchyard at midnight and taken such pains over her education. The “ mildness and sensibility ” of her childish actions that had so pleased Collingwood had gone. She was in fair way of being a card-playing old lady. Strange impulses moved her. She could not restrain them. Her maid was to be married, and she looked about her for a suitable present. Shining on her sideboard was the elaborate kettle the Corporation of Newcastle had given her father for his work at Trafalgar. What better gift could she find anywhere ? She presented it to her servant, who promptly pawned it.

Sarah died in 1851, and an antiquary from Newcastle-on-Tyne visiting the pawnshops of Canterbury in 1886 came upon the kettle, a pledge which Alderman Hart of that town had never had redeemed. He had long ago given up hope of ever finding a purchaser for it. Since then it has again been lost.

Even Morpeth was forgetting the Admiral. For long Collingwood’s garden, facing his house in Oldgate, had been maintained as a recreation ground. There the Northumbrian



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miners had come in the summer to sit on the grass and lie in the shade of the trees, now grown to a fair height, and listen to the murmur of the Wansbeck. But even this could not last. A descendant of Matheson, Collingwood's friend and neighbour, bought the grounds for the extension of his nursery garden. The oaks were felled. The cottages which Collingwood had pulled down were replaced.

His house was altered. The back part of it was acquired by the Roman Catholic church as a home for their priest at Morpeth, while a doctor lived and practised in the rest of the house. There was another flicker of memory in 1905 when, following the publication of Clark Russell's biography, the Corporation of Morpeth erected a tablet over the doorway in Oldgate : "Here lived the family of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood and here he spent the few and short periods of repose snatched from long and arduous service afloat," the plaque read. The doctor died and his part of the premises was turned into a political club.

In his centenary year there was a memorial service in St. Nicholas' Cathedral. Then once more the country lost interest in this representative Englishman. Only a few devoted, patient antiquarians remembered him. They rummaged and searched and were at last rewarded. More and more of Collingwood's letters, undoctored by Newnham, were discovered. They proved, if proof were needed, how false were the colours of the sham halo with which that arch-snob had surrounded him. Presently the great statue at Tynemouth cracked. It was in danger of collapsing altogether. No one was in the least hurry to assume responsibility for repairing it.

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The author's father could neither read nor write, and earned 24s. a week. When ten years old the Home Secretary of later years was working in a mill as a piecer, dodging the looms, running barefoot over oily floors, and earning 10s. a week, which went to help feed his six brothers and sisters. The future Food Controller often went hungry. He tells the story of "Piecer" Clynes's first public speech to discontented mill-hands, of his meeting with Mary Harper, a fellow worker and later his comrade through life.

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